

**A HISTORY OF LANGUAGE PLANNING IN THE GOLD COAST, 1874-1957**

**BY**

**BRIGHT ADOMAH-GYEKYE**

**(10461569)**

**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA,  
LEGON IN PARTIAL FULFMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD  
OF MPHIL HISTORY DEGREE**



**NOVEMBER, 2020**

**DECLARATION**

I, Bright Adomah-Gyekye, declare that, except for references to other people's work which have been duly acknowledged, this work is the result of my own research, done under the supervision of Dr Philip Atsu Afeadie and Prof Emmanuel Ababio Ofosu-Mensah and has neither in part or in whole been presented elsewhere for another degree.

Bright Adomah-Gyekye

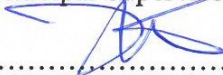
(Candidate)

Sign:  .....

Date: 29-06-2021 .....

Dr Philip Atsu Afeadie

(Principal Supervisor)

Sign:  .....

Date: 29-06-2021 .....

Prof Emmanuel Ababio Ofosu-Mensah

(Supervisor)

Sign:  .....

Date: 28-06-21 .....

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Glory be to our Heavenly Father for seeing me through this journey and the ones ahead.

First of all, I say a big thank you to my supervisors, Dr Philip Atsu Afeadie and Prof Emmanuel Ababio Ofosu-Mensah for their guidance and suggestions throughout the work.

Secondly, I am very grateful to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for supporting this research with funding through the *Re-invigorating Humanities Scholarship at the University of Ghana (REHURE-GH)* Project of July 2018 to August 2020.

Thirdly, I owe much appreciation to all my lecturers, the non-teaching staff and my colleague students at the Department of History for their support and encouragement during a very tough last academic year.

I would also like to acknowledge the immense contribution of my interviewees from the Bureau of Ghana Languages, and the staff at the Accra office of the Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD).

Finally, to my family, who have supported me with their never-ending love and prayers, I say God bless them.

**DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my mum, Naomi Amankwaah Boampong, and my grandma, Dora Nkrumah. May their souls continue to rest in the perfect peace of the Almighty God.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

DECLARATION.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	vii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background to the Study.....	1
Linguistic Landscape of the Gold Coast.....	5
Research Problem.....	8
Research Aim and Objectives.....	9
Research Questions.....	9
Literature Review.....	10
Theoretical Framework.....	20
Methodology.....	24
Partition of the Study.....	27
Significance of the Study.....	29
CHAPTER TWO: LANGUAGE PLANNING AT THE PRELIMINARY PHASE OF BRITISH RULE, 1874-1918.....	30
Introduction.....	30

Promotion of the English Language by British Officials.....	31
Promotion of Indigenous Languages by Christian Missions.....	39
Promotion of Mother Tongues by Educated Elites.....	43
Conclusion.....	46
CHAPTER THREE: LANGUAGE PLANNING DURING THE ERA OF BRITISH INDIRECT RULE, 1919-1945.....	47
Introduction.....	47
Changes and Continuities in British Posture Concerning Language Learning.....	48
Research on and Publishing in Indigenous Languages.....	55
Standardisation of Indigenous Language Orthographies.....	64
Conclusion.....	69
CHAPTER FOUR: LANGUAGE PLANNING DURING THE ERA OF DECOLONISATION, 1946-1957.....	71
Introduction.....	71
Indigenous Language Usage in Broadcasting: The Gold Coast Broadcasting Service (GCBS).....	72
Expansion in Indigenous Language Literature: The Vernacular Literature Bureau (VLB).....	74
Discourse on the Selection of an Indigenous Official Language for Post-Colonial Gold Coast.....	77
Conclusion.....	86

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION.....	87
Major Findings.....	87
Recommendations for Further Research.....	92
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	95

## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the history of language planning in the Gold Coast with emphasis on the deliberate efforts that were made to influence the learning, orthographies and usage of languages in during British colonial rule. Several scholars have dilated on language planning during the colonial era focusing mainly on language in education policies of governments and the official language question. Extant literature has concentrated on the efforts of the British colonial administration to promote the English language and the usage of indigenous languages in education in the Gold Coast to a certain extent. The efforts made by other language planners such as Christian missions, traditional authorities, educated elites and international cultural organizations to improve the learning, orthographies and usage of the at least sixty-eight indigenous languages have not been given equal attention. This work therefore aims to contribute to filling this lacuna. The study is qualitative and it relies on sources such as archival documents, newspaper articles, interviews, personal files, books, journal articles and unpublished dissertations. It also employs the linguistic colonialism framework.

This thesis reveals that between 1874 and 1957, not only British colonial officials but also Christian missions, traditional authorities, educated elites and international cultural organizations played significant roles in language planning in the Gold Coast in the form of policies, research, advocacy and publishing. This phenomenon was not new but started with Europeans and educated elites during the pre-colonial era. This study argues that the essential efforts made by language planners in the Gold Coast during the colonial era to promote indigenous languages left much to be desired, with respect to the few number of languages they focused on and, the dominance and indispensability of the English language in the country.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Language planning can be defined as conscious efforts to influence the learning, orthographies and usage of the language varieties of societies.<sup>1</sup> Language varieties may be described as languages or dialects depending on structural, genetic or historical principles.<sup>2</sup> Some of these principles include whether the language varieties are mutually intelligible or not, and the attitudes and goals of individuals, communities or countries. Thus, language varieties that are not mutually intelligible are referred to as different languages whereas those which are mutually intelligible are described as dialects of the same language. Also, dialects can be referred to as different languages in relation to the attitudes and goals of its speakers. Actors who engage in language planning can be referred to as language planners. They include governments, institutions and individuals. Some of the efforts implemented by language planners include policies, research, publication and advocacy to promote the learning, orthographies and usage of language varieties. This present study therefore deals with the deliberate efforts such as policies, research, publication and advocacy made by British officials, Christian missions, traditional authorities, educated elites and international cultural organization to influence the learning, orthographies and usage of languages in the Gold Coast during the colonial era.

---

<sup>1</sup> Robert L. Cooper. *Language Planning and Social Change*, Cambridge University Press, 1989: 45.

<sup>2</sup> Sebastian K. Bemile. "Promotion of Ghanaian Languages and Its Impact on National Unity: The Dagara Language Case." *Ethnicity in Ghana: The Limits of Invention*, (2000): 221.

Throughout Ghana's history several efforts have been made by various language planners to influence the learning, orthographies and usage of indigenous languages. For example, during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, European navigators, traders and chaplains together with educated elites, who had benefitted from castle school education, produced several publications on and in indigenous languages. They include the earliest word-list by a Dutch navigator and trader, Peiter de Marees, in his 1601 publication *A Description and Historical Declaration of the Golden Kingdom of Guinea, otherwise Called the Golden Coast of Myna*, published in Amsterdam; a vocabulary of about 500 Afutu words by a Danish chaplain, W. J. Müller, at Frederiksberg near Cape Coast in his 1673 publication *Die Africanische auf der Guineische Goldküste gelegene landschafft Fetu*, published in Hamburg; an Mfantse translation of the Lord's Prayer, the Apostle's Creed and the Ten Commandments by an educated elite, J. E. J. Capitein, in 1744; and a brief grammar of the Mfantse and Accra languages by an educated elite, Charles Protten of Christiansborg, who had been educated in Denmark, in the form of a 1764 publication titled *En nyttig Grammaticalsk Indledning til Tvende hidindtil gandske ubekiendte Sprog, Fanteisk og Acraisk* published in Copenhagen.<sup>3</sup>

This trend continued and was intensified in the nineteenth century by European and local missionaries together with other educated elites who had benefitted from missionary school education. Two such European missionaries were the Basel missionaries and the Wesleyan missionaries based in Akropong and Cape Coast respectively. These two missions made conscious efforts to influence the learning, orthographies and usage of the languages of the Gold Coast communities in which they were stationed. For the Basel missionaries, it was Akuapem Twi whilst the Wesleyan missionaries worked on and used Mfantse. They conducted

---

<sup>3</sup> David Kimble. *A Political History of Ghana: The Rise of Gold Coast Nationalism, 1850-1928*. Oxford University Press, 1963: 510.

research on their respective languages, and published religious and educational works in them for their church and school activities. The Basel missionaries, unlike the Wesleyan missionaries, went a step further to teach in Akuapem Twi in both their churches and schools. In effect, the language planning efforts of European missionaries and their local converts together with students contributed significantly to establishing literacy in indigenous languages during the nineteenth century.

With respect to the Basel mission, some of their instrumental missionaries, and local converts and students were Rev. J. G. Christaller, and Rev. David Asante together with Rev. Jonathan Bekoe, respectively. Rev. J. G. Christaller conducted research on the Akuapem Twi and published several Akuapem Twi translations of prayers, hymns and Bible stories. These include *The Four Gospels*, published in 1859 in London; *The Acts of the Apostles* published in 1859 in Basel; and *Genesis, Revelation, and A Selection from the Epistles* published between 1861 and 1862 in Stuttgart. Between 1870 and 1871 David Asante and Jonathan Bekoe, two of the Basel Mission's earliest students, helped Rev. J. G. Christaller to produce an Akuapem Twi translation of the Bible, *The Complete Bible*, published in Basel.<sup>4</sup>

The Wesleyan missionaries also made significant efforts to influence the learning, orthographies and usage of Mfantse among its speakers. Some of their outstanding missionaries, converts and students were Rev. S. A. Shipman, Rev. Robert Brooking, Rev. Thomas B. Freeman, Rev. H. Wharton, Rev. Timothy Laing and Rev. William de Graft.<sup>5</sup> Rev. William de Graft was an educated elite who was responsible for bringing the English Wesleyan missionaries to the Gold Coast in the nineteenth century. Together these missionaries engaged in research, publication and advocacy for the Mfantse language. In 1837, Rev. William de Graft

---

<sup>4</sup> Kimble. *Political History of Ghana*, 511.

<sup>5</sup> See, Thomas Birch Freeman. *Journal of Various Visits to the Kingdoms of Ashanti, Aku, and Dahomi in Western Africa, Third Edition*. Frank Cass and Co., 1968.

published the first Mfantse primer and a short Mfantse-English vocabulary. Rev. S. A. Shipman produced Mfantse translations of the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and part of the Catechism in 1842. The following year Rev. Robert Brooking published *Nucleus of a Grammar of the Fanti Language: With a Vocabulary*. In 1864 Rev. Timothy Laing published *Fante Primer* in Cape Coast. Rev. Thomas B. Freeman and Rev. H. Wharton established a newspaper, *The Christian Messenger and Examiner*, in 1859. Even though this newspaper was published in English, it advocated for the virtues of Mfantse and other African languages. The newspaper made a recommendation for classic and foreign literature to be translated into Mfantse and other African languages.

There were also other educated elites outside Christian missionaries who made efforts to influence the learning, orthographies and usage of indigenous languages during the nineteenth century. Two such educated elites were J. P. Brown and D. L. Carr.<sup>6</sup> In 1868 they published *Mfantse Grammar* in Cape Coast. According to them, the aim of the book was to confer upon the people of the Gold Coast the rights of having their languages added to the catalogue of written languages. The motto of the book was for the people to 'Let every foreign tongue alone, till you can read or write your own.'<sup>7</sup> In the book, Brown and Carr provided a standard system of spelling for all the several dialects of Mfantse based on the Cape Coast dialect. The dialect was based on the English alphabet. Rev. J. G. Christaller, however, criticized their orthography. He claimed that his system of transliteration would have been suitable for Mfantse, Asante Twi and Akuapem Twi.

This was the nature of language planning in the Gold Coast before British colonial rule officially began in 1874. How did the establishment of this formal rule by the British affect the

---

<sup>6</sup> Kimble. *Political History of Ghana*, 512.

<sup>7</sup> Kimble. *Political History of Ghana*, 512.

efforts of language planners in the Gold Coast until it came to an end in 1957? It is this question that the present thesis seeks to answer.

## **LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE OF THE GOLD COAST**

There are at least sixty-eight indigenous languages in Ghana or the former Gold Coast. They include Abbron, Adangbe, Adele, Ahanta, Akan, Akposo, Animera, Anufo, Anyin, Avatime, Awutu, Bimoba, Bissa, Bondoukou Kulongo, Buli, Chakali, Chala, Cherepon, Chumburung, Dagbani, Dangme, Deg, Delo, Dwang, Ewe, Farefare, Ga, Gkyode, Gonja, Gua, Hanga, Jwira-Pepesa, Kamara, Kantosi, Kasem, Konkomba, Konni, Kplang, Krache, Kusaal, Larteh, Lelemi, Ligbi, Logba, Mampruli, Nafaanra, Nawuri, Nkami, Nkonya, Ntcham, Nyangbo, Nzema, Paasaal, Safaliba, Sehwi, Sekpele, Selee, Siwu, Southern Birifor, Southern Dagaare, Tafi, Tampulma, Tumulung Sisaala, Tuwuli, Vagla, Wali, Wasa and Western Sisaala. Many of these sixty-eight languages have their respective dialects. For example, the Akan language has dialects such as Akuapem Twi, Asante Twi and Mfantse. As already mentioned, these three dialects and other dialects are regarded as languages in their own right by some of their speakers including governments. All of Ghana's sixty-eight languages are classified under the Gur, Kwa and Mande language families. These three language families belong to the wider Niger-Congo language family of African languages.

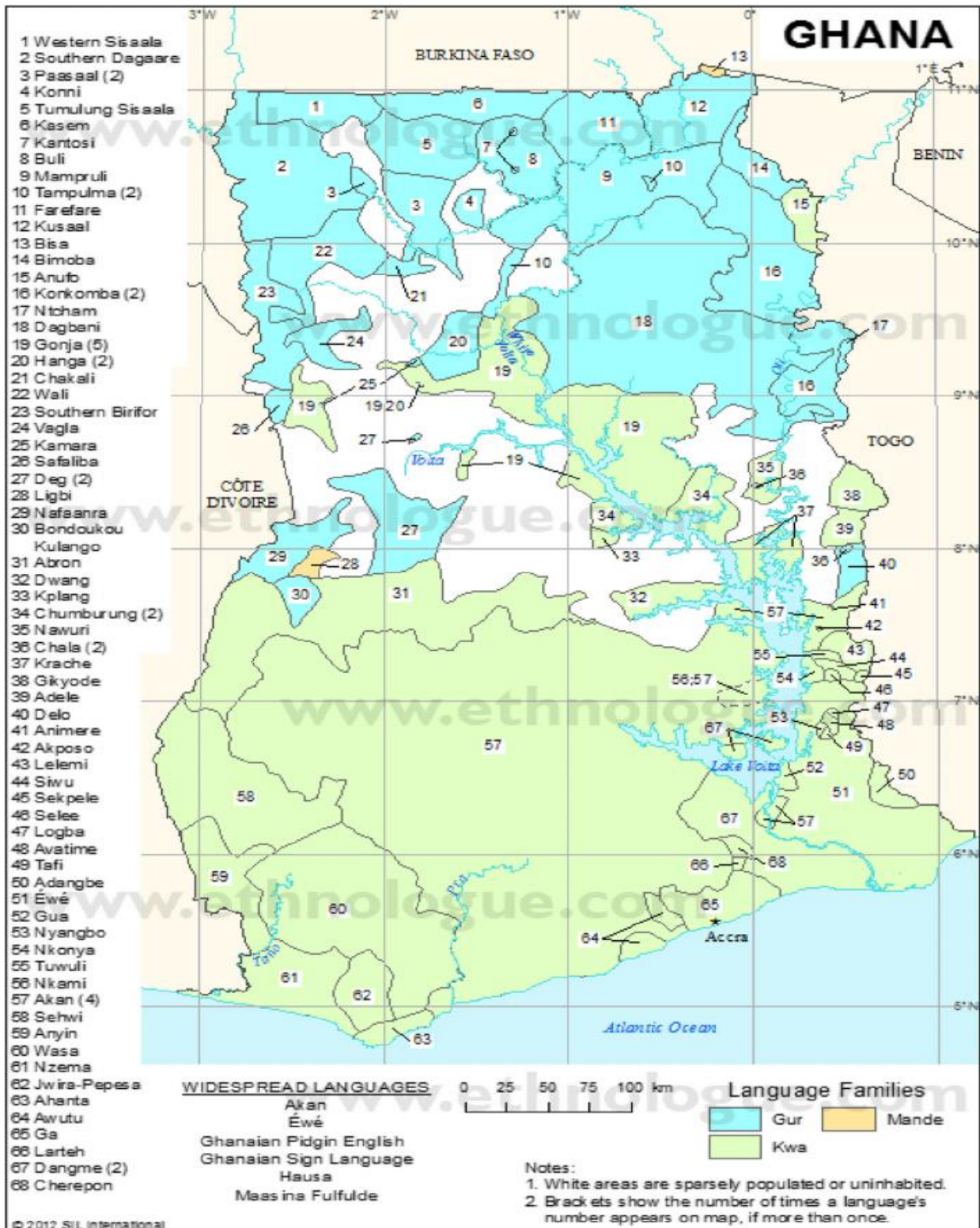


FIG. 1 2012 Language Map of Ghana by SIL International, in Gladys N. Ansah. "Re-examining the Fluctuations in Language-in-Education Policies in Post-Independence Ghana," *Multilingual Education* Vol. 4, No. 12, (2014): 5.

Today, out of the at least sixty-eight indigenous languages of Ghana eleven have become government sponsored languages.<sup>8</sup> They include Asante Twi, Akuapem Twi, Dagaare, Dagbani, Dangme, Ewe, Ga, Gonja, Kasem, Mfantse and Nzema. These languages have benefitted most from the efforts of language planners from the pre-colonial through the colonial to the post-colonial eras. They are also known as government sponsored Ghanaian languages because of the sponsorship both British colonial governments and post-colonial governments have provided and continue to provide to other language planners in addition to their own policies. During the colonial era, the British colonial administration sponsored researches and publications on indigenous languages by Christian missions, educated elites and European philologists. Another area in which both colonial and post-colonial governments sponsored efforts on indigenous languages is in language in education policy, particularly the use of these indigenous languages as the medium of instruction in schools. Since the colonial era, British colonial governments and post-colonial governments have periodically altered this aspect of language in education policy.

There have been periods where English was made the medium of instruction at all levels of education and others where these indigenous languages have been made the medium of instruction at some levels of education. The British colonial administration reversed its 1882 language in education policy in 1925 allowing the use of these indigenous languages as the medium of instruction at the first three stages of primary school.<sup>9</sup> Another example from the post-colonial era was in September 2007 when the then NPP government also reversed its 2002 language in education policy reinstating the use of these indigenous languages as the medium

---

<sup>8</sup> “The Bureau of Ghana Languages-BGL.” Retrieved from ([www.ghanaculture.gov.gh](http://www.ghanaculture.gov.gh)-29/05/2006) on 29/09/2018 at 17:56.

<sup>9</sup> Charles Owu-Ewie. “The Language Policy of Education in Ghana: A Critical Look at the English-Only Language Policy of Education.” *Selected Proceedings of the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on African Linguistics*, (2006): 77.

of instruction from pre-school to the lower primary level.<sup>10</sup> This change in policy in 2007 was the result of advocacy by traditional rulers, politicians, linguists, educationists and other members of the Ghanaian public.

The other aspect of language in education policy is the teaching of these indigenous languages as subjects at all levels of education. This aspect of the policy has remained stable from the pre-colonial through the colonial to the post-colonial eras. At the primary and the secondary levels of education only the eleven languages are taught whereas at the tertiary level additional indigenous languages are taught and are also areas of research.

## **RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Several scholars have dilated on language planning during the colonial era focusing mainly on language in education policies of governments and the official language question. Extant literature has concentrated on the efforts of the British colonial administration to promote the English language and the usage of indigenous languages in education in the Gold Coast to a certain extent. The efforts made by other language planners such as Christian missions, traditional authorities, educated elites and international cultural organizations to improve the learning, orthographies and usage of the at least sixty-eight indigenous languages have not been given equal attention. This work therefore aims to contribute to filling this lacuna. The study is qualitative and it relies on sources such as archival documents, newspaper articles, interviews, personal files, books, journal articles and unpublished dissertations. It also employs the linguistic colonialism framework.

---

<sup>10</sup> Gladys N. Ansah. "Re-examining the Fluctuations in Language-in-Education Policies in Post-Independence Ghana." *Multilingual Education Vol. 4, No. 12*, (2014): 8.

## **RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

The aim of this study is to analyse the developments in language planning in the Gold Coast during British colonialism, thus from 1874 to 1957. The following objectives were formulated from the aim of the thesis namely:

1. To evaluate language planning at the preliminary phase of British rule in the Gold Coast, particularly from 1874 to 1918
2. To assess language planning during the era of British indirect rule in the Gold Coast, especially from 1919 to 1945
3. To examine language planning during the era of decolonisation in the Gold Coast, mainly from 1946 to 1957

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What were the achievements of language planners in the Gold Coast during the preliminary phase of British rule, especially from 1874 to 1918?
2. What was the state of language planning undertaken during British indirect rule in the Gold Coast, mainly from 1919 to 1945?
3. How was language planning undertaken during the era of decolonisation in the Gold Coast, particularly from 1946 to 1957?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

As part of this study, several books, journal articles and unpublished dissertations by historians and linguists relating to language planning and colonialism were reviewed. In these works, the scholars examine several efforts made to influence the learning, orthographies and usage of languages in Ghana and other African countries from the pre-colonial through the colonial to the post-colonial eras. The theme of language planning and its policies in the colonial and post-colonial eras have therefore received extensive coverage in literature from different perspectives.

A dominant theme of studying language in the colonial period was how language was used as an auxiliary function to consolidate colonial rule in Africa. For example, in his evaluation of Northern Nigerian political agents from 1886 to 1914, Philip A. Afeadie argues that political agents in British colonial administration occupied a crucial position in Northern Nigeria, mainly because of their command of language and their intermediary role in the British colonial administration.<sup>11</sup> The political agents were competent in both indigenous languages such as Hausa and pidgin English. As a result of this, they acted as intermediaries between British colonial officers, and Nigerian traditional rulers and their subjects. A Nigerian complainant or a visiting British colonial officer could not meet a British political officer without passing through them. In the event of a traditional ruler's misconduct, political agents could be sent to collect his staff of office. Political agents were therefore cultivated by traditional rulers. In some cases, political agents colluded with traditional rulers to exploit their subjects. Many of them also developed trading as a side-line. Afeadie further argues that the

---

<sup>11</sup> Philip A. Afeadie, *Brokering Colonial Rule: Political Agents in Northern Nigeria, 1886-1914*. Verlag Press, 2008: 118. See also, Philip A. Afeadie, "Language of Power: Pidgin English in Colonial Governing of Northern Nigeria." *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, No. 17, (2015-2017), 63.

resurgence of power by political agents due to their command over language of power (English and Hausa) partly informed colonial language policy in Northern Nigeria.<sup>12</sup> In their efforts to reduce both the intermediary role and influence of political agents, the British colonial administration instituted a language policy to train their political officers to facilitate direct communication between them and the people. British political officers had to learn Hausa in particular and any other language that was widely spoken in their territories such as Yoruba, Nupe, Kanuri, Bassa or Okpoto as a requirement for promotion. Lower and higher standard examinations were therefore established to test for their ability to speak and write languages. Afeadie's works are relevant to the current studies because they deepen our understanding of the political contexts within which language policies evolved in Northern Nigeria. Yet, the broad (political) focus of his studies does not permit him to look into the development of orthographies of African languages within the colonial period. The present study fills this gap.

Other studies on language in colonial Africa have also focused on the development of local languages. In the case of Ghana, Gertrude Nkrumah and Cyrelene Amoah-Boampong examine the British colonial administration's attitude and response to the linguistic situation in the Gold Coast. They show the various stages in the development of local languages in Ghana were connected to the kind of political system practised in the colony. According to them, in the early phase of colonial rule in Ghana, thus 1874 to 1920, which was characterized by the policy of assimilation, there was no conscious effort on the part of the British colonial administration to establish a definite language policy. During this period, Christian missions largely influenced language policy in the area of educational policies. These language in education policies remained central to subsequent British colonial educational and language policies. However, after 1920 and until 1957, the British colonial administration as part of its

---

<sup>12</sup> Philip A. Afeadie, *Brokering Colonial Rule*, 92.

indirect rule policy began to exercise a great level of control of the educational system in colonial Ghana. Nkrumah and Amoah-Boampong therefore contest the general assumption that British colonial rule undermined the development of indigenous languages.<sup>13</sup> The lacunae here is that they do not examine the development of different dialects and the kind of contestations dominance of a certain dialect came with. The present study investigates the contestations in the developments of dialects in Ghana to understand the basis of why some other dialects were neglected and never developed.

Indeed, Sebastian K. Bemile's study of the Dagara language throws some light on the domination of one dialect over other mutually intelligible languages. Bemile points to the significant role of Christian missions and the British colonial administration in creating the seeming neglect of certain dialects over the other. The Dagara language has a number of dialects including Waali, Gyirbaalu, Birfuor, Lobri, Wule and Dagara-Dyula. Yet, as Bemile argues, it is the Gyirbaalu dialect which is the major dialect and the government sponsored dialect.<sup>14</sup> Work on this dialect began with the Catholic White Fathers mission in 1929. In 1951, the British colonial government adopted this dialect to be worked on by the Bureau of Ghana Languages. Bemile's study shows how the development of one language by missions/colonial institutions was used to represent all other dialects of that language. The present study corroborates Bemile argument and further examines this phenomenon by extending the conversation to the case of other indigenous languages for example the Akan language where debates surrounded the development of different dialects such as the Akuapem Twi, Asante Twi and Mfantse.

---

<sup>13</sup> Gertrude Nkrumah with Cyrelene Amoah-Boampong, "Rethinking British Colonial Policy in the Gold Coast: The Language Factor." *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, New Series, No. 15, (2013), 155. See also, Gertrude Nkrumah. "A History of Language Policy in Ghana, 1920-1971." MPhil in History Dissertation, Department of History, University of Ghana, 2011: 130.

<sup>14</sup> Bemile, "Promotion of Ghanaian Languages," 220.

In terms of the neglect of indigenous languages, Rogers Krobea Asante examines one of Ghana's endangered indigenous languages called Nkami. Nkami is a Guan language which is spoken by the Nkami people who live at Amankwa in the Kwahu North District and the Afram Plains North Constituency of the Eastern Region of Ghana. They were resettled in this area by the CPP government in 1964 from Nkami 'Didalo' to make way for the construction of the Volta Lake. Asante points out that the greatest force that holds the Nkami people together and preserves their language is the institution of Afram deity.<sup>15</sup> Another major threat to the language is that it is neither used as a medium of instruction nor taught as a subject in schools. With respect to the continuous existence of the Nkami language, one important factor is the Afram deity. This deity not only preserves the Nkami language but also unites the Nkami people. The Nkami people are compelled to speak only the Nkami language at the shrine of the Afram deity. Yet, as other Guan groups, Asante argues that one of the factors that threaten the continuous existence of the Nkami language is the fact that the Nkami people, unlike when they lived in Nkami 'Didalo,' live in a community where the Akan and the Ewe languages are dominant. Asante's work is very significant for this study because it reflects the larger problem of a seeming decline of Guan languages. The present study corroborates Asante's argument on how the dominance of other similar ethno-linguistic group in an area goes a long way to affect the usage of a language. The present study also, however, goes further to use historical methods to evaluate how colonial officials and policies contributed to the neglect of the orthography of other Guan languages, specifically, Effutu.

Alfa I. Sow and Mohamed H. Abdulaziz assess the rationale of language planning efforts made by European colonial administrations on African languages after the First World

---

<sup>15</sup> Rogers Krobea Asante, "Introducing Nkami: A Forgotten Guang Language and People of Ghana." *Legon Journal of Humanities*, Vol. 28, No. 2, (2017): 73.

War. According to them, colonial powers employed either a straight forward policy of linguistic, educational and cultural assimilation or a selective and more subtle approach.<sup>16</sup> World War I, and the social and cultural disruptions that followed it led to European colonial officers taking to learning the languages of their respective African territories in order to better understand those African societies. Furthermore, with the support of colonial administrations such as the Belgian, the British, the French and the German, a number of African languages including Bambara, Hausa, Kiswahili and Lingala evolved into inter-ethnic vehicular languages that were spoken amongst their respective African armies and police forces. Also, beginning in the late 1920s European colonial officers popularized the negative effects of forcing their respective European languages on their African subjects and advocated for intensive research into the languages of their respective African territories. This call contributed to the establishment of the International Institute of African languages and Civilizations later the International African Institute (IAI) in 1926 with Belgium, Egypt, Great Britain, Italy, South Africa, Sweden and the United States as member countries. The institute's aim was to conduct research on African languages, civilizations and challenges. It developed the International African Alphabet or the IAI alphabet which is used to write African languages in Roman characters. Sow and Abdulaziz therefore centrally argue that European colonial administrations made their language planning efforts with the aim of promoting European languages and colonialism. Their work is relevant for the present study as it examines the motives and impacts of the language planning efforts of the British colonial government and the IAI in the Gold Coast during the colonial period.

---

<sup>16</sup> Alfa I. Sow and Mohamed H. Abdulaziz, "Language and Social Change." *General History of Africa Vol. VIII: Africa since 1935*, (1993): 522.

Makim M. Mputubwele similarly examines the impact of language policies of Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of Congo, on literatures in her four national languages. Mputubwele contends that language policy in Congo gave much prominence to French and have negatively affected the growth of literature in the local languages.<sup>17</sup> According to him, the number of languages spoken in Zaire range from 251 to 300. Like African languages in general, many are oral and have yet to develop a literate tradition, which, in his opinion, is a serious handicap for them. A majority of these languages belong to the Bantu family under the Eastern branch of the Niger-Congo family known as Benne-Congo. Zairian languages are also not mutually intelligible and as a result four have emerged as lingua francas and achieved the status of national languages. They are recognized as such by government bodies and the constitution. The four national languages are Kikongo, Lingala, Swahili and Tshiluba. The emergence of the languages as lingua francas, particularly Kikongo, Lingala and Tshiluba, owes much to the development of trade relations and communication between the various peoples of Central Africa long before the arrival of Europeans to the region. Swahili also became a lingua franca as a result of the Arab slave trade and Arab influence in the eastern region of Zaire.

By literature Mputubwele means writing in general and not only creative writing. He states that the negative effects of the language policy were evident in the literary field as well as in the press. More and more people wrote in French. Writings in local languages tended to be published in the newspapers that became less and less important, whereas only works in French found their way to the rare publishing houses. The successive political eras, from the Leopold era, through the Belgian colonial period, to President Mobutu's dictatorship, had

---

<sup>17</sup> Makim M. Mputubwele, "The Zairian Language Policy and Its Effects on the Literatures in National Languages." *Journal of Black Studies* 34, No. 2, (2003): 272.

respective far-reaching negative consequences on literature in the national languages. During King Leopold's era, the production of literature made a timid start and it was essentially religious because it was begun by Protestant missions. In the course of Belgian colonialism there were literary works by the Protestant missions and colonial officials. Post-colonial governments reversed this growth in literature. This culminated in the 1973 banning of missionary periodicals by President Mobutu's government. These were the major outlet for writings in national languages and this ban effectively ended the timid evolution. Mputubwele's work is significant for the present study because it draws attention to the domination of colonial languages over local languages. The present study examines the case of the Gold Coast where English also became the language of power and government during the colonial period.

On language and education, Charles Owu-Ewie examines the historical development of educational language policy in Ghana. He contests the assumption that the use of Ghanaian languages as the medium of instruction at the lower primary level leads to poor academic performance of students but rather links the problem to a weak foundation of students in their mother tongues before they are replaced with English at the upper primary level.<sup>18</sup> More specifically, he evaluates what necessitated the change in policy in 2002. Owu-Ewie then argues for the reversal of the policy and proposes the implementation of a late-exit transitional bilingual education model. According to him, the controversy about which language to use as the medium of instruction in Ghanaian schools especially at the lower basic level dates back to the castle schools and missionary era. Prior to this introduction of formal education in Ghana, indigenous languages were used as the medium of instruction in traditional education. After 1529 until 1925 various European languages were used as the medium of instruction in castle

---

<sup>18</sup> Owu-Ewie, "The Language Policy of Education in Ghana," 83.

and missionary schools depending on the nationality of the Europeans in charge. These languages included Portuguese, Dutch, Danish and English. By 1925, the British were in power in Ghana and Ghanaian languages were made the medium of instruction at the lower primary level, with English used at the higher levels. However, the policy has been unstable with changes in 1951, 1956, 1957, 1967, 1970, 1974 and 2002. The Ghanaian languages used include Akan (Fante and Twi), Nzema, Ga, Ga-Adangbe, Ewe, Gonja, Kasem, Dagbani, and Dagaare.

In September 2002, the then NPP government reversed the 1974 language in education policy making English instead of Ghanaian languages the medium of instruction at the lower primary level of education in Ghana. This new policy attracted a lot of criticism from a section of academics, politicians, educators, traditional rulers and the general public. One of the main reasons provided by the government was the poor academic performance in Ghanaian schools, especially in English proficiency. Owu-Ewie contests this assertion and proposes the late-exit transitional bilingual education as the way forward. This is a model of the transitional bilingual education (TBE) programme. This model allows for about forty percent use of the mother tongue in teaching until the sixth year of schooling. Thus, Ghanaian children should be taught with Ghanaian languages from primary one to four. English should gradually be introduced as the medium of instruction in primary five and finally replace the Ghanaian language in primary six. English should be taught as a core subject from primary one to four whereas the Ghanaian language becomes a core subject in primary six onwards. In addition to this model, more needs to be done in the areas of training highly motivated teachers; providing effective supervision, educational materials, and parental and community involvement in education; and formulating sound language and education policies. Despite Owu-Ewie's contributions to the literature on language development in Ghana, he does not extend his discussions to the development of orthographies and language usage in general outside the classroom.

On language and national identity, Akosua Anyidoho and M. E. Kropp Dakubu in their 2008 article, “Ghana: Indigenous Languages, English, and an Emerging National Identity,” examine the relationship between indigenous languages, English and national identity in Ghana. According to them, indigenous languages and English are intertwined in Ghana as indigenous languages are the mark of the Ghanaian identity whereas the English language is the prerequisite for effective participation in Ghana’s democracy.<sup>19</sup> They state that Ghana has approximately fifty non-mutually intelligible languages. Almost all these languages belong to the Gur and Kwa branches of the Niger-Congo phylum. The only exceptions are two small languages, Ligby and Bisa, which belong to the Mande branch. It could be argued that all Ghanaians are expected to be able to speak English, the official language of Ghana, when the current education policy is taken into consideration. Also, English is increasingly being regarded as a marker of Ghanaian identity. From the beginning of modern education in Ghana in the nineteenth century, Ghanaian languages have been increasingly relegated to the periphery in the education system. Education happens to be a major avenue where nationalist sensibilities are fostered. Many radio and television stations use Ghanaian languages primarily to reach as many listeners as possible. Thus, many Ghanaians associate Ghanaian languages with oral communication and English with reading and writing, education and national sensibilities. Ghanaians also associate Ghanaian languages with a sub-national or a supra-national ethnic identity. Irrespective of the status and role of English in Ghana, the ability to speak a Ghanaian language is an important feature of the Ghanaian identity. Yet, there are not sufficient efforts towards the serious use of Ghanaian languages in formal contexts, nor to achieve real universal competence in English.

---

<sup>19</sup> Akosua Anyidoho and M. E. Kropp Dakubu, “Ghana: Indigenous Languages, English and an Emerging National Identity,” *Language and National Identity in Africa*, (2008): 157.

Anyidoho and Kropp Dakubu propose the formulation of a language policy and its implementation through the education system with political will and serious funding. The present study adds to this debate by assessing the nature and impact of language planning efforts on the English language on the one hand and indigenous languages on the other during Ghana's colonial era.

Still on language usage in Ghana, Kari Dako and Millicent Akosua Quarcoo similarly examine official and individual attitudes towards bilingualism in English and a Ghanaian language. According to Dako and Quarcoo, Ghanaians have a positive attitude towards English because it is the sole language that can enhance their chances of moving up the educational ladder and thus ensures that they get secure and well-paid jobs, and they want to keep their indigenous languages but they subconsciously refuse to transmit these languages to their children by speaking English with them at home.<sup>20</sup> Even though most Ghanaians can speak both English and a least one of the indigenous languages, the former is their only de facto official language as former subjects of British colonial rule. There is not enough clarity of the general language policy of Ghana currently, and the state is yet to systematically seek information on which Ghanaians speak what languages where. Even though governments say they are committed to the preservation of Ghanaian culture and tradition, in practice they pay little attention to Ghanaian languages which are the vehicle of Ghanaian culture. This is evident in the language policies in education.

These policies are structured to promote English. For a person to function officially in Ghana, they do not need a Ghanaian language. This includes entry into the civil service or the public service. Aspiring for the highest office of the land, the presidency, does not require

---

<sup>20</sup> Kari Dako and Millicent Akosua Quarcoo, "Attitudes towards English in Ghana," *Legon Journal of Humanities* 28, No. 1, (2018): 28.

competence in a Ghanaian language. As the official language, it is English that is reserved for such domains. It is used for official functions in not only the Executive branch but also in the Parliament and the Judiciary. English is also the main language used by the Ghanaian media. By using historical methods and analysis, the present study looks at the debate which surrounded the choice of official language in Ghana on the eve of independence and how English finally triumphed over other local languages as the choice for official language.

The above secondary sources have mostly dealt with the significance and impact of colonial and post-colonial language policies in the Gold Coast or Ghana and other African countries. However, the works that are centred on the Gold Coast during the colonial era have not focused adequately on how colonial policies in general contributed to few out of the at least sixty-eight indigenous languages becoming government sponsored indigenous languages. They have also not addressed how the English language became a dominant and an indispensable language by the end of British colonial rule in the country in 1957. This accounted for the language being maintained as the sole official language after independence even though the name of country was changed from Gold Coast to Ghana in the spirit of decolonisation. Also, these scholars have mostly focused on British officials whereas the roles of other language planners such as Christian missionaries, traditional authorities, educated elites and international cultural organisations have not been equally emphasised. The present study therefore addresses this lacuna.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study employs the Linguistic Colonialism framework to explain the changes and continuities in language planning in the Gold Coast during British colonialism in the country. In his 2000 article “Most Obedient Servant: The Politics of Language in German Colonial Togo,” Benjamin Lawrence explains Linguistic Colonialism as “the imposition of a foreign

language on an alien culture with the aim of making it ultimately indispensable for the functioning of the then subordinate culture.”<sup>21</sup> According to him, the theory attempts to describe a system of colonial imposition from above. Applying it to German colonial Togo, he argues that this theoretical conceptualization of the battle of languages goes some way towards recovering the voice of African actors in early colonial archival records. In the work he explains how the German colonial government imposed the German language on the Togolese people. Instead of fulfilling its intended purpose, he argues that the policy later resulted in the development of Ewe nationalism. Thus, the attempts by the German colonial administration to promote the German language in place of the already dominant English language in Togo gave way for the Ewe language to thrive and become a unifying force for the Ewe people and fostered nationalism amongst them.

According to him, English replaced Portuguese as the prominent European language in Togo by the 1860s. However, following the German colonization of Togo in 1884, the colonial administration initiated a policy of replacing the English language with the German language as the medium of instruction in both missionary and state schools in 1904, as part of its deliberate attempts to make the German language an essential language in the colony. Even though the German language was introduced in Togo in the middle of the nineteenth century by German speaking missionaries, these missionaries were outnumbered by English speaking ones, hence the dominance of the English language and the German colonial administration’s intervention. These efforts by the German colonial government were largely unpopular and unsuccessful because having knowledge in the English language provided the Togolese people more economic opportunity in comparison to the German language. They could find work with

---

<sup>21</sup> Benjamin Nicholas Lawrence. “Most Obedient Servant: The Politics of Language in German Colonial Togo.” *Cahiers d’Études Africaines*, Vol. 40, Cahier 159, (2000): 517.

the missions and entrepreneurs at the coast. The colonial government's language in education policy resulted in the Togolese people migrating to neighbouring Gold Coast and sending their wards to be educated there. As a result of this, the English language was brought back to the schools as a second language.

On the other hand, the German colonial government allowed both missionary and state schools to use the Ewe language as the medium of instruction together with the German language where necessary from the onset of their rule. The administration of von Doering went to the extent of providing financial support for the standardization of the Ewe language. Prior to the support of the German colonial administration to the efforts of Christian missionaries towards the ascendancy of the Ewe language in Togo since 1884, the missionaries laid the foundation. Their schools were based in the Ewe speaking areas at the coast and attracted children from diverse inland cultures and languages. They continued to publish numerous works in the Ewe language during the colonial era. These publications included pedagogical guides, hymnals, grammar, arithmetic, geography and religious textbooks, and dictionaries. Not only did the Ewe people benefit from these publications in terms of education, religion and commerce but the development of their language served as a unifying element and gave birth to their nationalist consciousness.

Joseph Errington in his 2001 article "Colonial Linguistics" states that colonialism is "a rubric for largely different exploitative purposes, institutional configurations, and modes of subordination: so, the work of linguistic description done under aegis of various colonial regimes needs to be considered with an eye to the conditions that enabled it and the social interest inscribed in it."<sup>22</sup> He further argues that the actions of colonial agents outran their

---

<sup>22</sup> Joseph Errington. "Colonial Linguistics." *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 30, (2001): 20.

intended purposes as observed in German colonial Togo, and colonial linguistic work similarly had uses and impacts beyond those foreseen or intended by its authors. In the article, he evaluates descriptions of human linguistic diversity that began in the sixteenth century under the influence of European colonialism across the world. The article is a comparative review of the factors for the publication of these works. These factors include firstly the interests of the authors; secondly the ideas and institutions that influenced their production; and finally, their role in serving as evidence of the difference between the European colonialists and their colonial subjects. As these publications spread through Europe, they piqued the interest of comparative philologists. As forerunners of modern linguists, they played an important part in establishing continuous work on the languages of colonial territories and popularizing worldwide interest in the differences between the colonialists and the colonized.

Errington defines colonial linguistics as an intersection of technology (literacy), reason and faith, and also as an endeavour of several changes including from pagan to Christian, speech to writing and foreign to understandable. All this was within the framework of exploitation, institutions and subordination that was imbedded in colonialism. He therefore calls for an examination of works on linguistic diversity in colonies to take into account the circumstances that allowed it to be executed and the social motives behind them. He also asserts that technologies of literacy from Europe facilitated both missionaries and non-missionaries to produce linguistic works on the languages of colonized peoples and in so doing making these languages symbols of the spiritual, territorial and historical hierarchies that developed in colonies. Both missionary and non-missionary European linguists applied scientific knowledge to device orthographies for the oral languages of colonized peoples. Since not all of these numerous languages benefitted from the work of European linguists, while many took on new uses and prominence as major languages and lingua francas, an even greater number were left undeveloped and became categorized as minor languages.

This theory fits my work as it aims to examine the efforts of language planners including British officials, Christian missions, traditional authorities, educated elites and international cultural organisations in the Gold Coast during the colonial era to promote either the English language or the indigenous languages in the country. Language planning efforts on English and indigenous languages are therefore examined in terms of British colonialism. Thus, the efforts of these language planners are assessed firstly with respect to how the establishment and consolidation of British colonialism from 1874 to 1918 influenced them. Secondly, language planning is evaluated in terms of how British indirect rule affected it. Finally, the efforts are discussed in relation to how the decolonisation movement influenced them.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This is a qualitative study, as it aims to examine the changes and continuities in the efforts made by language planners to influence the learning, orthographies and usage of languages in the Gold Coast from 1874 to 1957. It relies mainly on primary sources which relate to the languages, language planners and language planning efforts in the Gold Coast during the period under study. The languages include indigenous languages and English. The language planners are British officials, Christian missions, traditional authorities, educated elites and international cultural organisations, whereas the language planning efforts are policies, research, publishing and advocacy.

Archival documents were obtained from the Accra branch of the Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD) and the Balme Library. The PRAAD files were from the ADM4/1, ADM11/1, CSO7/1, CSO18/1, RG3/5 and RG17/1 series. These series relate to Gold Coast Ordinances, the Office of the Secretary of Native Affairs, the Colonial Secretary's Office and the Department of Education respectively. The files include ADM4/1/148; ADM11/1/816, 867, 900, 1007, 1009, 1077, 1029, 1272, 1381, 1422, 1456,

1608; CSO7/1/2; CSO18/1/83; RG3/5/15, 33, 59, 209; and RG17/1/22. They contain ordinances, letters, census data, committee reports, departmental reports, manuscripts, pamphlets, memorandums, certificates, receipts, newspaper clippings and minutes of meetings. These documents dated from 1920 to 1955 relate to and were produced by governors, colonial secretaries, secretaries for native affairs, the government printer, principals, teachers, researchers, chiefs, Christian missionaries, provincial and district commissioners, Achimota College, the Vernacular Literature Bureau (VLB), the Gold Coast Broadcasting Service (GCBS), the School of Oriental Studies (SOS), the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures (IIALC), and the United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). They concern policies, research, publishing and advocacy having to do with English, Hausa, Ahanta, Akuapem Twi, Asante Twi, Awutu, Brissa, Dangme, Ewe, Guan, Ga, Nzema and Mfantse.

The documents from the Balme Library include Legislative Council Debates as well as George E. Metcalfe's 1964 compilation *Great Britain and Ghana: Documents of Ghana History, 1807-1957*. Metcalfe's work contains relevant orders in council, letters patent and reports. With respect to the Legislative Council Debates, the documents are speeches from 1925 to 1957 given by governors, ministers, and council members prominent amongst them being Governor Frederick G. Guggisberg, Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah and Opposition Leader K. A. Busia. The speeches are also centred on the English language and indigenous languages. The documents from Metcalfe's compilation date between 1874 and 1920 and relate to the annexation of the Gold Coast Colony, Ashanti, the Northern Territories and British Togoland as well as a report by the 1920 Educationists' Committee.

The study also relied on newspapers from the Balme Library and the Institute of African Studies (IAS) library, specifically, *Gold Coast Weekly Review* and the *Daily Graphic* respectively. These newspapers date from 1953 to 1956. The relevant articles have to do with

three main issues. The first is the work of the VLB, the GCBS and the UNESCO on indigenous Gold Coast languages. Secondly, the articles discuss the roles of the United Kingdom Parliament and the Gold Coast Legislative Assembly in preparation of the independence of the Gold Coast in 1957. Finally, there are also articles written by columnists in which they make contributions to the discourse on the official language of the Gold Coast after the country gains independence from Britain. The use of local newspapers as a source material provides an unofficial view/perspective to language planning during the colonial period and also permits an assessment of the subject from the African point of view.

Written materials were complemented by oral sources. Resource personnel from the Bureau of Ghana Languages (BGL), formerly the Vernacular Literature Bureau were interviewed for the study. Key informants interviewed from the BGL included a former director and the heads of the bureau's Dangme, Ewe, Ga and Nzema sections. These experts have been with the Bureau within the last three decades. As linguists and publishers working at a state institution which has been publishing exclusively in indigenous languages since the colonial era, these informants provided essential information about language planning in Ghana during the colonial era, especially from 1951 to 1957. Most important were the activities of the bureau, then referred to as the Vernacular Literature Bureau, as well as the contributions of their oldest partner the United Nation's Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Personal files were also relied on for the study. They include brochures and a book that were provided by interviewees. These documents provide information on the publications and activities of the BGL from the colonial to the post-colonial era. Of particular interests to the study are those publications and activities that fall within 1951 to 1957. Also, Dr Victoria E. Smith of the Department of History at the University of Ghana, shared a 1967 compilation by the BGL with me. This was from a previous project of hers. The compilation contained relevant publications in Ghanaian languages from the pre-colonial to the colonial era by British

officials, Christian missionaries and educated elites. Again, out of the copious list of publications, it was those which formed part of the background and the period of the study that were utilized for the study.

The archival materials were read extensively for analysis. I took note of relevant information which helped to answer the research questions. Before oral interviews were conducted, I explained the purpose of the interview to the respondents. They were made aware that the interviews were going to be used for academic purposes and were also going to audio-recorded. The recorded interview was transcribed the very day the interview took place. The transcribed data was read extensively to tease out themes corresponding to the research questions. The above primary sources were supplemented with secondary sources. They included books, journal articles and unpublished dissertations by mainly historians and linguists on languages in Ghana, Africa and the wider world. The above sources were corroborated with one another as in order to substantiate the information they provided. In all, data for the work were analysed and categorised to show connections to the themes which were developed in the presentation of the research findings.

It is unfortunate that the present study did not rely on documents from other branches of PRAAD outside Accra. This was mostly due to travel restrictions that were imposed in the country as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In some instances, resource persons were reluctant to grant interviews. This resulted in the small number of oral sources used for the study. However, the above-mentioned interviews and documents from the Accra branch of PRAAD provided information which aided me to analyse the debates concerning the usage, learning and development of orthographies of some local languages in the Gold Coast and also why others were neglected. Indeed, primary sources from the Balme Library and the Institute of African Studies Library also complemented the information obtained from interviews and the Accra branch of PRAAD.

## **PARTITION OF THE STUDY**

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction to the study. It consists of a discussion the linguistic landscape of the Gold Coast and language planning in the Gold Coast prior to the official beginning of British rule in the country. Chapter two, three and four are a chronological division of the Ghana's colonial era.

Chapter two focuses on the language planning efforts that were made during the preliminary phase of British colonialism, particularly from 1874 to 1918. During this period, British officials promoted the learning and usage of the English language in the country through ordinances whereas Christian missions and educated elites promoted the learning, orthographies and usage of indigenous languages by means of teaching, research, publishing and advocacy.

Chapter three assesses the efforts that were made in the second phase of British colonialism in the name of the policy of indirect rule, specifically from 1919 to 1945. At the beginning of this era the colonial government changed its education policy on indigenous languages. This encouraged British officials to research and publish in and on indigenous languages with much reliance on traditional authorities. It also gave the efforts of Christian missions educated elites and the IALC, especially publishing, a significant boost.

Chapter four examines the efforts that were made during the movement towards independence from British colonial rule, especially from 1946 to 1957. During this final phase GCBS, VLB and UNESCO played leading roles in the promotion of indigenous languages. However, the English languages had become the dominant and an indispensable language in the Gold during this era to the extent that it was maintained by the independence movement as the official language of the country in 1957.

Chapter five serves as the concluding chapter of the study. It consists of a summary of the findings of the thesis and recommendations for further research in language planning in the colonial and post-colonial eras.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study adds to the literature on language planning and colonialism in the Gold Coast. Existing scholarship focuses primarily on the significance and impacts of colonial language policies on indigenous languages in the country. This present study, by relying mostly on primary sources, expands on both language planning efforts and the language planners involved. It emphasises other roles such as research, publishing and advocacy played by Christian missions, traditional rulers, educated elites and international cultural organizations during this period. The study also employs a more detailed and up to date linguistic landscape of the Gold Coast. This places the number of indigenous languages of the country at not less than sixty-eight with addition of the Nkama language in 2005. Finally, the thesis utilizes the linguistic colonialism framework by examining the efforts of British officials to promote the English language in relation to efforts made to promote indigenous languages in the country at the time. By doing so, an explanation is provided for the dominance and indispensability of the English language in the Gold Coast as compared to the indigenous languages especially during the period of decolonisation. This also provides an explication for maintaining the English language as the sole official language of the independent Gold Coast, renamed Ghana, in 1957.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LANGUAGE PLANNING AT THE PRELIMINARY PHASE OF BRITISH RULE, 1874-1918**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter deals with the first phase of British colonialism in the Gold Coast. This chapter examines the pre-occupation of language planners in the Gold Coast from 1874 to 1918. Specifically, it analyses how language planners carried out the business of language planning vis-a-vis efforts to influence the learning, orthographies and usage of languages in the Gold Coast. During this period, the English language became the official language of the four territories of Gold Coast as they were successively brought under British colonial rule. Not only was it the language of governance but its use in education was also encouraged. The Christian missions, however, continued to employ the indigenous languages in both their churches and schools. They also continued to publish works on and in these languages. The same can be said about the educated elites during this period.

This chapter argues that the activities of the British colonial government in terms of language planning laid the foundation for the preponderant use of the English language in schools and amongst the educated elites during the colonial period. It also demonstrates that even though the Christian missions and the educated elites played significant roles in the promotion of the learning, orthographies and usage of indigenous languages, they did not cover all the indigenous languages leaving many others unattended to. Out of the at least sixty-eight indigenous language varieties of the Gold Coast only Akuapem Twi, Asante Twi, Dagomba, Ewe and Ga languages were catered for during this period. These languages represented the communities in which the Christian missions were stationed, and the mother tongues of the educated elites who were engaged in efforts to promote indigenous languages.

## **PROMOTION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE BY BRITISH OFFICIALS**

Between 1874 and 1918, the British established their authority over the four territories of the Gold Coast Colony in succession and with this came the official imposition of the English language on the peoples of the colony. The territories were the Gold Coast, Ashanti, the Northern Territories and Western Togoland. Authority over the Gold Coast and the Northern Territories was secured largely by treaties of protection between the British and traditional rulers. On the contrary, Ashanti and Western Togoland came under the authority of the British following British victories in wars against Asante rulers and the German colonial administration of Togoland respectively. In the case of Togoland, the British and the French occupied its western and eastern portions respectively after overpowering the then German colonial administration there, at the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

The first of the four territories of the Gold Coast where British authority was established was in the Gold Coast Colony. Together with Lagos, the territory was separated from Sierra Leone on 24 July, 1874, and constituted into the Gold Coast Colony.<sup>23</sup> Subsequently on 13 January, 1886, the Gold Coast and Lagos were split into separate colonies.<sup>24</sup> From then on, the Gold Coast consisted of only the Gold Coast Colony until the remaining three territories were successively added to the colony. The territory consisted of British forts and castles together with their surrounding Mfantse and Ga states. As a result of hostilities between themselves and the Asante, the Mfantse and Ga states had entered into several treaties of protection with the British prior to the year 1874. The establishment of British authority in the Gold Coast in 1874 followed one such confrontation which involved an Asante invasion of the protectorate in 1873.

---

<sup>23</sup> Order in Council, 6 August, 1874, C.1139, A & P (1875) lii, Document 303, G. E. Metcalfe. *Great Britain and Ghana: Documents of Ghana History, 1807-1957*. Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1964: 368-369.

<sup>24</sup> Letters Patent, 13 January, 1886, Ordinances of the Gold Coast, 1903, vol. 2, 1327, Document 350, Metcalfe. *Great Britain and Ghana*, 420-422.

This conflict resulted in the ‘Sagrenti’ War of 1874, in which the Asante were defeated. It was after this war that the then Gold Coast protectorate and Lagos were split from Sierra Leone and put together as the Gold Coast Colony. Also, on 26 September 1901 the Gold Coast Order in Council was passed to define the boundaries of the colony and annex territories within the boundary that had not yet been annexed.<sup>25</sup> This Order in Council came into effect on 1 January, 1902, after it was published in the Gold Coast Government Gazette by Governor M. Nathan.<sup>26</sup>

Ashanti was the second territory of the Gold Coast Colony where British authority was established. Following the 1884-5 Berlin Conference, the British had to occupy or sign treaties with states in the north of the Gold Coast Colony to keep other European nations from establishing their authority there. British authority was therefore formally established in Ashanti in 1901 after the defeat of the Asante to the British in the Yaa Asantewaa War.<sup>27</sup> This was the final war fought between the British and the Mfantse on the one side, and the Asante on the other. There had been several such wars fought earlier in the nineteenth century. Earlier in 1896, the British occupied Asante and signed treaties of protection with several Asante states to forestall French and German influence in the territory. However, the Yaa Asantewaa War broke out in 1900 after Governor Frederick M. Hodgson announced during his visit to Kumasi that Asantehene Agyeman Prempeh, who had been deposed and sent into exile in 1896, would not be returned to resume his throne. The governor’s attempt to obtain the Golden Stool was another major cause of the war. The defeat of the Asante in 1901 was followed by the establishment of formal British rule over the territory. From then on, the territory came under the administration of the Governor of the Gold Coast Colony as the Ashanti Province. This

---

<sup>25</sup> Gold Coast Order in Council, 26 September, 1901, Ordinances of the Gold Coast, 1903, ii, 1347, Document 438, Metcalfe, *Great Britain and Ghana*, 524-525.

<sup>26</sup> Gold Coast Order in Council, 26 September, 1901, Ordinances of the Gold Coast, 1903, ii, 1347, Document 438, Metcalfe, *Great Britain and Ghana*, 524-525.

<sup>27</sup> Ashanti Order in Council, 26 September, 1901, Gold Coast Government Gazette, 1 January, 1902, Document 436, Metcalfe, *Great Britain and Ghana*, 521-523.

annexation was also officially undertaken by the Ashanti Order in Council of 26 September, 1901, which also became operational after it was proclaimed in the Gold Coast Government Gazette on 1 January, 1902.

In 1901, British authority was also formally established in the Northern Territories.<sup>28</sup> This was the culmination of treaties of protection between the British and various rulers of states in the territory on the one hand, and agreements on territorial boundaries between the British and the French as well as the Germans on the other hand. The British entered into treaties of protection with rulers of states in the territory to forestall the establishment of French and German rule there. Whereas the French were attempting to establish their authority in the Northern territories from the eastern and northern frontiers, the Germans were approaching the area from the west. On their part, one of reasons for which the rulers of states in the Northern Territories entered into treaties of protection with the British was to secure themselves from the raids of the war bands of Samory Touré. The British employed the services of both British nationals and Gold Coasters in signing these treaties in the 1890s. After much bargaining and compromises the British reached final agreements with the French and the Germans in 1898 and 1899 respectively. The British followed these treaties with rulers of states in the Northern Territories, the French and the Germans with the 26<sup>th</sup> September, 1901, Northern Territories Order in Council, which was also became operational after it was published in the Gold Coast Government Gazette on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1902.

The establishment of British rule in Togoland took place at the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.<sup>29</sup> The British, together with the French, ceased the Togoland from the

---

<sup>28</sup> Northern Territories Order in Council, 26 September, 1901, Gold Coast Government Gazette, 1 January, 1902, Document 437, Metcalfe. *Great Britain and Ghana*, 523-524.

<sup>29</sup> Sir Hugh Clifford to W. H. Long, Accra, 29 April, 1918, Cd. 9210, A & P (1918) vi, Document 455, Metcalfe. *Great Britain and Ghana*, 567-569.

Germans, as they fought on opposing sides during the war. Invading Togoland from their respective bordering territories, the British and the French took charge of the western and eastern spheres of Togoland respectively. Sir Hugh Clifford, the then Governor of the Gold Coast Colony, entered into a provisional agreement with M. Noufflard, the Lieutenant Governor of Dahomey in 1914, establishing both British and French authority in the western and eastern portions of Togoland respectively.<sup>30</sup> The British colonial administration of the Gold Colony made it clear to the peoples of Western Togoland that their territory had not been annexed and that their final destiny would be decided once the war had ended. In fulfilment of this commitment after the end of the First World War, Western Togoland was not returned to the Germans, who were defeated, but the territory and the eastern sphere under French authority were officially handed to the British and the French as the joint British and French Mandated territories of Togoland in 1922 by the League of Nations. Western Togoland, then British Togoland, was subsequently officially annexed and became part of the Gold Coast Colony.

The British colonial administration of the Gold Coast Colony like other British colonies in Africa was headed by a Governor. The administration also consisted of the Legislative Council, Provincial Chief Commissioners, District Commissioners, a Superior Court of Justice formerly the Judicial Assessor's Court, District Magistrates Courts, Native Courts and other Courts which were created from time to time as the need arose. The Governor was expected to administer the colony by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council. With the approval of a Secretary of State, the Governor appointed officers to serve in various capacities in the colonial government. This local administration under the leadership of the Governor was however answerable to the British monarch, as the Governor exercised all power and

---

<sup>30</sup> Sir Hugh Clifford to W. H. Long, Accra, 29 April, 1918, Cd. 9210, A & P (1918) vi, Document 455, Metcalfe. *Great Britain and Ghana*, 567-569.

jurisdiction on the behalf of the monarch. Thus, the British monarch had the authority to veto ordinances that were passed in the Gold Coast Colony, in whole or in part, through one of their Principal Secretaries of State, and with the advice and consent of the British Parliament, or with the advice of their Privy Council.

The English language became the de facto official language of the Gold Coast Colony, Ashanti, the Northern Territories and Western Togoland as they came under British colonial rule in succession. It was the language used by the Governor, the Legislative Council, the Provincial and District offices, government departments and the courts in the Gold Coast Colony in the performance of their duties and for communication between their offices. Also, being able to speak, read and write the English language was a prerequisite for indigenes of the Gold Coast to be elected to the Legislative Council as at 1895.<sup>31</sup>

The British colonial administration's language policy could also be observed in the education sector of the Gold Coast Colony between 1874 and 1918. Just as they made the English language the language of governance in the Gold Coast Colony, the British colonial administration also made the language the medium of instruction in state schools instead of indigenous languages such as Akuapem Twi, Asante Twi, Ewe, Mfantse and Ga. This was done through mechanisms such as the 1882 Education Ordinance and Code for the Gold Coast and Lagos.<sup>32</sup> Not only was this ordinance used to promote the English language instead of indigenous languages but Education Inspectors were discouraged from developing an interest in the indigenous languages by being moved from one linguistic area to another periodically.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> Nkrumah with Amoah-Boampong, "Rethinking British Colonial Policy in the Gold Coast," 146.

<sup>32</sup> Bemile, "Promotion of Ghanaian Languages and Its Impact on National Unity," 206.

<sup>33</sup> Nkrumah with Amoah-Boampong, "Rethinking British Colonial Policy in the Gold Coast," 145.

The objective of the 1882 ordinance was not in accordance with the language in education policy of Christian missions in the Gold Coast Colony at the time. Christian missions including the Basel mission and the Wesleyan mission used indigenous languages such as Akuapem Twi, Mfantse and Ewe as the medium of instruction in their respective schools. To encourage these missions to replace indigenous languages with the English language as the language of education in their schools, the British colonial administration tied the provision of government grants to their schools' adherence to the ordinance. This came as a recommendation made by the first Inspector of Schools of the Gold Coast Colony in 1884.<sup>34</sup> Government grants to mission schools who used an indigenous language to teach from the early stages of education were to be considered temporary until they replaced it with the English language at those stages. The inspector's view was common amongst members of the British colonial administration as they considered indigenous languages to be a matter of interest to only comparative philologists. They did not regard indigenous languages as important to their 'civilising' mission.

In spite of promoting the English language in both governance and education in the Gold Coast Colony, the British colonial administration did have an interest in the indigenous languages of the colony. First of all, there was a communication barrier between members of the administration and their subjects in the colony.<sup>35</sup> Also, understanding the languages of the peoples of the Gold Coast Colony was seen as understanding their minds or understanding 'the Black man's mind' in general. Pursuant to solving the former problem and achieving the latter agenda, Governor William B. Griffith in 1889 made a suggestion to the Colonial Office for colonial officers with proficiency in Akuapem Twi, Mfantse and Ga to be paid gratuities. This

---

<sup>34</sup> Kimble. *A Political History of Ghana*, 513.

<sup>35</sup> Bemile. "Promotion of Ghanaian Languages and Its Impact on National Unity," 207.

was to encourage his officers to learn the indigenous languages of the colony. The Colonial Office approved of the governor's suggestion in that same year.<sup>36</sup>

However not all colonial officers were in favour of this new policy. Still holding unto the view that the indigenous languages were not needed in the fulfilment of the objective of 'civilizing' the peoples of the Gold Coast colonies, provincial and district officers continued to make their case to Governors during this period. These officers were reluctant to learn at least one of the many indigenous languages of the provinces and districts where they were stationed, as required of them by the new policy. A senior officer made such a petition to Governor H. Bryan in 1907.<sup>37</sup> This was the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories. He argued that instead of compelling provincial and district commissioners to learn one of the indigenous languages of their respective provinces and districts, they should be supported to facilitate the learning of the English language amongst the peoples of the Gold Coast in their respective areas, because that would be more beneficial in the long run for the administration of the Gold Coast Colony. This however did not sway the minds of the Governor and the Colonial office.

But there were colonial officers who not only learnt to speak, read and write the indigenous languages of their respective provinces and districts for gratuities, but also went a step further to embark on research and publication on these languages. One such colonial officer was F. W. H. Migeod, a Transport Officer. In 1911 and 1913 he published two volumes of *The Languages of West Africa*, which were amongst the major studies of the languages of West Africa during that period.<sup>38</sup> He was personally motivated by the belief that for a European to understand the mind of the African they must learn an African language. Another colonial officer who worked in this field was Captain Robert S. Rattray, an assistant district

---

<sup>36</sup> Kimble. *A Political History of Ghana*, 513.

<sup>37</sup> Kimble. *A Political History of Ghana*, 514.

<sup>38</sup> Kimble. *A Political History of Ghana*, 514.

commissioner at Ejura in the then Ashanti Province. Amongst his several publications on indigenous Ghanaian languages are *A Collection of Ashanti Proverbs* and *An Elementary Mole Grammar* published in 1916 and 1918 respectively.<sup>39</sup> The latter work is one of the earliest publications on the grammar of the indigenous languages of the Northern Territories Province.

Even though indigenous languages were not the language of governance in the Gold Coast, they were one of the determining factors of ensuring representation of the different linguistic groups in the Legislative Council of the colony during this period. As already mentioned, by 1895 proficiency in the English language was a requirement for indigenes of the Gold Coast to be elected to the Legislative Council of the Gold Coast Colony. However, in 1916 the British colonial administration, in their effort to make the Legislative Council more representative, appointed three traditional rulers to the council to represent the speakers of three indigenous language groups.<sup>40</sup> The languages were Twi, Mfantse and Ewe. Paramount chiefs of three states who spoke these three languages were chosen to represent all states who spoke the languages. The announcement was carried by Governor Hugh Clifford on 25<sup>th</sup> September, 1916.<sup>41</sup> The three paramount chiefs in question were Nana Ofori Attah, the Omanhene of Akyem Abuakwa; the Omanhene of Anomabo; and the Fia of Awuna Ga; representing the Twi-speaking states, the Mfantse-speaking states and the Ewe-speaking states respectively.<sup>42</sup> The Governor declared that the addition of these three paramount chiefs to represent three language groups in the colony made the Legislative Council ‘really representative of the people’ for the first time since British rule was established in the Gold Coast Colony.

---

<sup>39</sup> “Bibliography of Works in Ghana Languages.” compiled by the Bureau of Ghana Languages (BGL) in 1967, Personal Files of Dr Victoria E. Smith.

<sup>40</sup> Sir Hugh Clifford, Speech in Legislative Council, 25 September, 1916, Document 452, Metcalfe, *Great Britain and Ghana*, 557-559.

<sup>41</sup> Sir Hugh Clifford, Speech in Legislative Council, 25 September, 1916, Document 452, Metcalfe, *Great Britain and Ghana*, 557-559.

<sup>42</sup> Sir Hugh Clifford, Speech in Legislative Council, 25 September, 1916, Document 452, Metcalfe, *Great Britain and Ghana*, 557-559.

It can therefore be argued that even though the British colonial administration imposed the English language on the peoples of the Gold Coast Colony in terms of governance and education, to make it indispensable to them, they also contributed to the development of the indigenous languages of the peoples of the colony for their own benefit. On the one hand they made the English language the only language of governance and education but in order to communicate with the peoples of the Gold Coast; better understand them; and provide representation for them in governance, the British colonial administration contributed to the learning, orthographies and usage of several indigenous languages. Members of the administration learnt indigenous languages depending on which province and district they were stationed in order to earn gratuities; researched and published on these languages; and used the languages as a tool to give representation to the linguistically diverse groups in the Legislative Council.

### **PROMOTION OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES BY CHRISTIAN MISSIONS**

The efforts of Christian missions to develop the learning, orthographies and usage of indigenous languages in the Gold Coast Colony between 1874 and 1918 was largely the same as it was before the beginning of British colonial rule in 1874. As it was from the early nineteenth century, when they began to arrive in the Gold Coast, the Christian missions, consisting later of both European and native missionaries, developed the learning, orthographies and usage of indigenous languages through research, publication, advocacy and teaching. They researched into the languages of the areas where they were stationed and worked; devised orthographies for these languages; published both educational and religious materials in these languages; advocated for further development and usage of these languages; and used the languages to teach in both their churches and schools.

What was new was that as British rule was successively established over the peoples of the Gold Coast Colony, Ashanti, the Northern Territories and Western Togoland, these Christian missions and their activities within these territories also came under that colonial authority. However, the British colonial administration did not, to a large extent, exercise a stringent control over the Christian missions and their activities in the Gold Coast Colony. Prior to 1874, the British military as well merchants based in forts, castles and other settlements in the Gold Coast partnered with the Christian missionaries in their interactions with the peoples of the Gold Coast. Whereas the British military and merchants mainly traded with the peoples of the Gold Coast, the Christian missions were mostly engaged in evangelism amongst the peoples of the Gold Coast. The partnership between the two groups was also cordial because they were all Europeans. And as citizens of European nations, their interests were also intertwined because their governments back home in Europe were responsible for their wellbeing, and utilized their presence on the Gold Coast for their interests such as trade, diplomacy and imperialism.

The relationship between the British colonial government and the Christian missions, after colonial rule began in the Gold Coast Colony in 1874, continued to be a cordial one. The colonial administration supported both the religious and educational activities of the Christian missions in the Gold Coast. Britain was a Christian nation and as such the members of the British colonial administration of the Gold Coast Colony were Christians and wholeheartedly supported the spread of the Christian Faith amongst the peoples of the colony. The schools of the Christian missions were also an important avenue for the dissemination of British or Western education to the children of the colony.

However, the British colonial administration and the Christian missions did not see eye to eye when it came to the issue of the indigenous languages of the peoples of the Gold Coast. On their part, the Christian missions used the indigenous languages of the communities where

they were stationed to teach in their churches and schools. This was done to facilitate a better understanding of their sermons and lessons amongst their converts and students respectively. The British colonial administration was in favour of using the English language as the medium of instruction in Gold Coast schools instead, as was evident in their 1882 Education Ordinance and Code for the Gold Coast and Lagos. However, as already mentioned the administration did not force the Christian missions to replace the indigenous languages with the English language but rather attempted to persuade the missions by making state grants to their schools only temporary until the missions adopted the use of the English language. Knowing the benefits of their choice of language of instruction to the students in their schools, the Christian missions continued to advocate for a change in policy by the colonial government until under Governor Frederick G. Guggisberg the policy was changed in favour of indigenous languages in line with the then indirect rule policy.

Between 1874 and 1918, there were two main Christian missions operating in the Gold Coast Colony. They were the Basel mission and the Wesleyan mission. These missions continued to work to improve the learning, orthographies and usage of indigenous languages in the Gold Coast Colony as they did prior to 1874. The specific languages they worked on were Akuapem Twi, Asante Twi, Ga and Mfantse. Their European and native missionaries used these five languages to preach and teach in their churches and schools respectively. They also conducted researches on these languages and devised orthographies for them. With the written forms of the indigenous languages, they published several news sheets, periodicals, language dictionaries, traditional proverbs, traditional songs and translations of Christian literature as well as classic Western creative writings. The news sheets were an avenue for not only Christian missionaries but also members of the educated elite to write about and in indigenous languages. Not only did they advocate for the British colonial government to replace the English language with indigenous languages as the medium of instruction in state

schools, but they also advocated for members of the educated elite to also develop the learning, orthographies and usage of their indigenous languages. They also established printing presses in the Gold Coast Colony to publish works by both their missionaries and members of the educated elite.

During this period the Basel missionaries were stationed amongst communities who spoke Akuapem Twi, Asante Twi, Ga and Mfantse. As a result, these were the indigenous languages which they worked to promote their learning, orthographies and usage. Some of their European missionaries who engaged in language planning efforts were Rev. Johann G. Christaller, Rev. Christian W. Locher and Rev. Johannes Zimmermann. These three missionaries jointly compiled a language dictionary in 1874.<sup>43</sup> The languages of the dictionary were Akuapem Twi, Ga and English. Rev. Christaller later produced two works by himself. They were a grammar and a dictionary of Asante Twi and Mfantse. The works were *A Grammar of the Asante and Fante Language Called Tshi* and *A Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language Called Tshi* published in 1875 and 1881 respectively.<sup>44</sup> In the case of the mission's native missionaries, one of the prominent ones was Rev. David Asante. In 1874, he published *Okristoni Akwantu*. This was an Akuapem Twi translation of John Bunyan's 1678 classic novel *The Pilgrim's Progress*.<sup>45</sup>

The mission did some of their publications in Basel and they were then shipped to the Gold Coast Colony to be used. They also established a printing press at Akropong where other works were also published. In 1879, the mission compiled *Twifo Sukuufo Nnwom*, a collection of Akuapem Twi songs, to be used in their schools.<sup>46</sup> That same year they also put together *Twi*

---

<sup>43</sup> "Bibliography of Works in Ghana Languages," BGL, Smith.

<sup>44</sup> Kimble. *A Political History of Ghana*, 511.

<sup>45</sup> "Bibliography of Works in Ghana Languages," BGL, Smith.

<sup>46</sup> "Bibliography of Works in Ghana Languages," BGL, Smith.

*Mmebusem 3,600*, which was a collection of 3,600 Akuapem Twi traditional proverbs also for educational purposes.<sup>47</sup> Also, in 1912 the mission published *Wiase Abasem Mu Nsemmansemma*.<sup>48</sup> This educational work was a translation of ninety-one stories from world history dated between 4000 BC and 1905 AD. The mission also engaged in publishing news sheets in indigenous languages during this period. One such news sheet was *Sika Nsona Sanegbalo* which was published in Ga.<sup>49</sup> Like other news sheets during this period, it was limited in both subject-matter and circulation.

The Wesleyan Mission also engaged in efforts such as publications and advocacy to develop the learning, orthographies and usage of Mfantse and Ga during this period. In 1910, Rev. Delany Russel published an Mfantse-English dictionary.<sup>50</sup> The mission had two important news sheets during this period. They were *Hogba Skul Ngmaloo*<sup>51</sup> and *The Gold Coast Methodist Times*.<sup>52</sup> As evident in their names, the former was published in Ga whilst the latter was published in the English language. The editors of these news sheets were a combination of missionaries and educated elites. One such educated elite editor of *Hogba Skul Ngmaloo* was E. W. Quartey-Papafio. In January 1897, the editors of *The Gold Coast Methodist Times* began to advocate against the use of English words when speaking Mfantse.<sup>53</sup> This was aimed at maintaining the purity of the Mfantse language and defending its inherent capacity to be used to describe Western concepts. One such editor of the news sheet who championed this course was Rev. S. R. B. Attoh Ahuma.

---

<sup>47</sup> “Bibliography of Works in Ghana Languages,” BGL, Smith.

<sup>48</sup> “Bibliography of Works in Ghana Languages,” BGL, Smith.

<sup>49</sup> Kimble. *A Political History of Ghana*, 517.

<sup>50</sup> “Bibliography of Works in Ghana Languages,” BGL, Smith.

<sup>51</sup> Kimble. *A Political History of Ghana*, 517.

<sup>52</sup> Kimble. *A Political History of Ghana*, 513.

<sup>53</sup> Kimble. *A Political History of Ghana*, 512.

## PROMOTION OF MOTHER TONGUES BY EDUCATED ELITES

It was not only Christian missions who opposed the British colonial administration's policy of imposing the English language on the peoples of Gold Coast Colony from 1874 to 1918. Educated elites who had benefited from mission and castle schools prior to and after 1874 also played a major role in promoting the learning, orthographies and usage of indigenous languages in the colony. Prominent amongst these educated elites were J. E. Casely Hayford, Kobina Sekyi, John Mensah Sarbah, E. W. Quartey-Papafio, Frederick W. K. Akuffo, D. L. Carr, J. P. Brown, J. J. Adaye and J. O. Okraku. Whiles some educated elites preferred to speak the English language instead of their native languages, because of the opportunities and the prestige which came with it, the above-mentioned individuals promoted their mother tongues even though they were also proficient in the English language and thus enjoyed the benefits associated with it. Through publications and advocacy, they championed the course for the learning, orthographies and usage of indigenous languages such as Akuapem Twi, Mfantse and Dagomba languages.

Some of the publications made by educated elites for the purpose of promoting the learning, orthographies and usage of indigenous languages were creative writing. A number of these works were translations of classic Western creative writing. Others were their own original stories. There were also those that were based on well-known traditional tales. In 1893, Frederick W. K. Akuffo produced *Hyen Mufi*. This was a translation of Robert M. Ballantyne's 1857 classic novel *Coral Island*.<sup>54</sup> The translation was published by Thomas Nelson and Sons, the publisher of the original English version of the novel. J. J. Adaye also produced *Bere Adu*

---

<sup>54</sup> "Bibliography of Works in Ghana Languages," BGL, Smith.

two decades later.<sup>55</sup> The work was a collection of twenty-five short stories written in Akuapem Twi. Some of the tales were original while others were inspired by traditional stories.

Other publications of educated elites were works on the grammar of indigenous languages. One such grammar book was the 1913 edition of D. L. Carr and J. P. Brown's *Mfantse Grammar* published in Cape Coast.<sup>56</sup> In this work, the authors urged the Mfantse people to be proud of their language. They also bemoaned the practice of some educated elites speaking to an audience in the English language even when a majority of the listeners did not understand the language. The authors did not leave out Christian missionaries, as some of them preached to their congregations in the same manner. Another important grammar book produced by an educated elite was J. O. Okraku's 1917 *Dagomba Grammar*.<sup>57</sup> This work was amongst the earliest publications on the languages of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast Colony.

Another avenue by which educated elites advocated for indigenous languages was through their work as editors and contributors to news sheets such as *The Gold Coast Echo*, *The Weekly News* and *The Gold Coast Nation*. In a piece written by J. E. Casely Hayford in *The Gold Coast Echo* in 1888, he emphasized the importance of indigenous languages.<sup>58</sup> Earlier that year another like-minded educated elite authored an article in the news sheet, in which he admonished fellow educated elites to take it upon themselves to improve the orthographies of Akan languages for the benefit of the Akuapem, Akwamu, Akyem, Asante, Denkyira, Mfantse and Wassaw.<sup>59</sup> In an article of the 5<sup>th</sup> May, 1908 issue of *The Weekly News*, J. E. Casely Hayford spoke out against the British colonial administration's policy of using the English

---

<sup>55</sup> "Bibliography of Works in Ghana Languages," BGL, Smith.

<sup>56</sup> Kimble. *A Political History of Ghana*, 513.

<sup>57</sup> Kimble. *A Political History of Ghana*, 515.

<sup>58</sup> Kimble. *A Political History of Ghana*, 518.

<sup>59</sup> Kimble. *A Political History of Ghana*, 512.

language as the medium of instruction at the early levels of education in state schools.<sup>60</sup> He argued that this practice was a cause of the lack of consistencies in the character of students from those schools. The editors of *The Gold Coast Nation* in 1914, just like D. L. Carr and J. P. Brown a year before, condemned churches who conducted services in the English language instead of indigenous languages.<sup>61</sup> According to them, this essentially meant that those members of their congregation, who were not proficient in the English language, were being led to worship God with only their lips, instead of their hearts and minds.

The educated elites also advocated for the development of the learning, orthographies and usage of indigenous languages through their associations. One such association was the *Mfantasi Amanbuhu Fékuw*. This association was established in Cape Coast in 1889.<sup>62</sup> One of the major reasons for which it was founded was to oppose the great level of Western influence in the Gold Coast. One of the prominent members of the association was John Mensah Sarbah. In his 1906 book, *Fanti National Constitution*, he outlined the objectives of the leaders of the association.<sup>63</sup> One major aim, according to him, was to encourage fellow members of the educated elite not to neglect their mother tongues as they learnt Western ideas and gained expertise in science.

## CONCLUSION

By 1919, language planning in the Gold Coast was spearheaded by three main language planners or agents. These were the colonial officials, Christian missionaries and educated elites in the colony. The focus and interests of these three planners varied significantly. Within this period, colonial officials were bent on promoting the use of the English language for

---

<sup>60</sup> Kimble. *A Political History of Ghana*, 512.

<sup>61</sup> Kimble. *A Political History of Ghana*, 513.

<sup>62</sup> Kimble. *A Political History of Ghana*, 518.

<sup>63</sup> Kimble. *A Political History of Ghana*, 518.

governance and as medium of instruction in schools. When some colonial officials showed interest in indigenous languages, it was not to promote the learning, orthographies and usage of those languages for the local population. It was rather connected to enhancing efficient communication between the administration and the indigenes, as well as promoting a better understanding of them. The Christian missionaries and educated elites however departed from this posture of the colonial officials. Significantly, they gave much impetus to the daunting task of developing the learning, orthographies and usage of indigenous languages in the Gold Coast. Clearly, not all indigenous languages were developed by the Christian missionaries and the educated elites. It appears the Christian missionaries developed the languages of the areas where they were stationed. This was necessary for their evangelical and educational activities. The educated elites, however, developed the orthographies of their mother tongues and advocated for the usage of these languages within the period.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

# **LANGUAGE PLANNING DURING THE ERA OF BRITISH INDIRECT RULE, 1919-1945**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, I shall examine the changes and continuities in language planning in the Gold Coast under the British indirect rule policy, particularly between 1919 and 1945. With the surge of the practice of indirect rule and the active involvement of chiefs in Gold Coast's legislative council, the role traditional authorities in shaping language planning in the Gold Coast became very obvious. Missionaries and educated elites on the other hand kept shaping discourses concerning language planning in the Gold Coast. New fields of orthography developments were further explored by the missionaries and educated elites.

Yet, by 1945, only a handful of languages in the Gold Coast had developed orthographies. The English language also remained the sole language of governance and the medium of instruction after standard three in schools. In this chapter, I argue that the colonial government was selective in the kind of language orthographies to be developed. Even though, to some extent, there was a change in the posture of the British colonial officials, who had hitherto advocated for the usage of the English language in schools, they were however measured in the development of orthographies as they did not sanction the wholesale production of orthographies of all the local languages. There was a deliberate attempt to restrict the development of the orthographies of some languages which were perceived to be spoken by a small section of the people and thus seen as irrelevant.

## CHANGES AND CONTINUITIES IN BRITISH POSTURE CONCERNING LANGUAGE LEARNING

By 1919, colonial rule in the Gold Coast had been consolidated. There were some changes and continuities in terms of language planning among British colonial officials in the Gold Coast. First, the colonial government continued, and paid more attention to the practice of encouraging British officials to learn indigenous languages for administrative and political purposes. This policy was in line and fit with the policy of indirect rule which was adopted by the British to administer their African colonies. The policy of indirect rule ensured that the local institutions of colonised peoples such as their chieftaincy institution, courts, and their languages would be the medium through which they would be administered.<sup>64</sup>

In the Gold Coast, this policy was given much impetus by Governor F. G. Guggisberg between 1919 and 1927. In the area of education, his administration, in their effort to improve education in the country, replaced the English language with some indigenous languages as the medium of instruction at the lower standards in schools in the country. This was introduced as the “Twelfth Principle” of the government’s “Fifteen Principles of Education” to improve education in the Gold Coast in 1925. Governor Guggisberg stated;

Education must be in English because there are several languages some with several dialects, spoken in this country; in none of them do suitable text-books exist... Probably the most important recommendation of the 1920 Committee was that English should be a subject, and the vernacular the medium of instruction... Now, teaching of English is the very thing in which our present system of education has failed most... The reason why English has so imperfectly learnt is that it has usually been taught in English and not in the vernacular... It is in the kindergarten that the acquisition of a language is most easy, and Government has therefore determined that the vernacular shall be used to lay a thorough foundation for English in all infant schools, and that its use shall be

---

<sup>64</sup> The idea of indirect rule was given much theoretical prominence through the work of Lord Frederick Lugard, *Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*. Blackwood and Sons, 1922.

continued to the utmost extent possible and practicable during the whole of primary education.<sup>65</sup>

Also, in line with the policy of indirect rule, there were renewed suggestions to step up this policy of promoting local language usage by British colonial officials. The Acting Secretary for Native Affairs (SNA) complained in the 1920s about “the low standard of knowledge of native languages among Government officers.”<sup>66</sup> The SNA was of the view that “proficiency in a language or languages is the most important in the case of Administrative Service...”<sup>67</sup> He therefore proposed an entirely new system of selecting and appointing European candidates for administrative service in the British colonies;

Candidates would be selected young and appointed for a term of say three years as students or cadets...they should have leisure for studying and receiving instruction first perhaps for a year in England on a modest allowance...during this period of training for three years the most important subject for study and periodical tests should be one of the local languages. (Anthropology, local law, Native Customs and co. could also be included in the curriculum.)<sup>68</sup>

The complaints of the SNA in 1923 contributed to Governor Guggisberg and other senior officers taking active steps to promote the use of local languages among British officers. For example, in 1925 the Acting Chief Assistant Colonial Secretary, A. Taylor was of the view that the syllabus of the Lower Standard Examination for British officers be changed. Specifically, Secretary Taylor proposed that a 100 to 200-word passage needed to be translated from the vernacular to English as part of the examinations. He also suggested that there should also be a conversational test in the vernacular to test the extent to which British officers could

---

<sup>65</sup> Speech in Legislative Assembly by Governor F. G. Guggisberg, 3 February, 1925, *Gold Coast Legislative Council Debates, 1925-26*. Government Printer, 1926; 85-86.

<sup>66</sup> Letter from the Acting Secretary for Native Affairs to the Colonial Secretary, 9 August, 1923, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/900, 1924-1929, “Native Languages, Knowledge of in Political Service (Case No. 50).”

<sup>67</sup> Letter from the Acting Secretary for Native Affairs to the Colonial Secretary, 9 August, 1923, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/900.

<sup>68</sup> Letter from the Acting Secretary for Native Affairs to the Colonial Secretary, 9 August, 1923, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/900.

speak the language. Apart from the changes in the scope of examination, Secretary Taylor also suggested that a new Board of Examiners be appointed which must include “such natives as they thought suitable.”<sup>69</sup>

Even though this policy of British official learning local languages was being practised by 1925, there were noticeable challenges. In his Memorandum to British officials in March 1925, Governor Guggisberg noted some of the difficulties in its implementation. First, the wide variety of languages spoken by the people of the Gold Coast made it difficult for British officers to study a single language, especially when they were transferred to a different territory where a different language was spoken.<sup>70</sup> To deal with this problem, there was the deliberate attempt to make District Commissioners permanent in their provinces and reduce as much as possible the incessant transfers of officials from one district to the other. Other challenges in the policy was that, some senior officials did not see the essence or the utility of learning local languages. From this point, the Governor resolved to attach an officer’s promotion, confirmation or any other benefit with his ability to speak the language of his district.<sup>71</sup> The only exception was for those officers who had been recently transferred from one language district to the other. Guggisberg stated that officers who had failed the language examination had not been confirmed in their appointment and had lost their appointment and seniority. Indeed, by July 1925, Guggisberg directed the Acting Colonial Secretary to halt the promotion and increment of all British political officers who could not understand the language of their district.<sup>72</sup> Financial incentives, in the form of allowance, and time were also made available to officers

---

<sup>69</sup> Letter from the Acting Chief Assistant Colonial Secretary to the Colonial Secretary, February, 1925, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/900.

<sup>70</sup> Memorandum from Governor F. G. Guggisberg to Colonial Officers, 25 March, 1925, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/900.

<sup>71</sup> Memorandum from Governor F. G. Guggisberg to Colonial Officers, 25 March, 1925, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/900.

<sup>72</sup> Letter from the Acting Colonial Secretary to the Secretary for Native Affairs, 2 July, 1925, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/900.

who had been transferred to different language speaking districts. Officers were also tested annually for their yearly increment.<sup>73</sup>

Instructions for language classes was usually given at the Achimota College. It appears only a handful of languages namely, Hausa, Mfantse and Twi were actually taught at Achimota during the period. Dates were fixed for officers who were already in service to receive their training on local languages at Achimota. The courses for British officials were in two sections; the first section ran within six weeks after which they took the Lower Standard Examination. The second course was carried out within one month after which they wrote the Language Maintenance Test.<sup>74</sup> Some British officials only enrolled in the first course without going through the pain of taking the second course and examination.<sup>75</sup> The Acting Colonial Secretary encouraged the officials to take the examinations as it was to their own advantage. In 1929, the Secretary notes:

It would appear from the cases brought to his Excellency's notice that language maintenance tests are looked upon with some apprehension by officers in the later stages of the service and the Governor hoped that many of them would see the advantages of taking the second examination while their knowledge of the language was still fresh and as soon as possible after they had taken the lower standard examination.<sup>76</sup>

In an effort to improve the teaching of the local languages at Achimota, the Principal proposed, in 1927, for a local resource person to sit beside W. E. Ward to offer assistance in sound and tone values in the course of instruction but this was not possible on account of

---

<sup>73</sup> Letter from the Acting Colonial Secretary to the Secretary for Native Affairs, 2 July, 1925, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/900.

<sup>74</sup> Letter from the Principal, Achimota College, A. Fraser to the Acting Secretary for Native Affairs, 1 February, 1927, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/900.

<sup>75</sup> Letter from the Acting Colonial Secretary to the Secretary for Native Affairs, 4 September, 1929, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/900.

<sup>76</sup> Letter from the Acting Colonial Secretary to the Secretary for Native Affairs, 4 September, 1929, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/900.

financial constraints.<sup>77</sup> He also suggested the “training of Africans to teach their language to Europeans.”<sup>78</sup> This suggestion was supported by the Secretary for Native Affairs for implementation. He further directed for the cost involved to be included in the budget of the college in 1927.<sup>79</sup> This reliance on the expert knowledge of locals in indigenous languages at Achimota extended to traditional authorities. For example, in 1927 W. E. Ward visited several Twi-speaking chiefs before he began teaching his Twi course.<sup>80</sup>

One challenge which beset the teaching and learning of languages in the Gold Coast was translation. Even though some political officers put in much efforts, they were not able to grasp the nuances of the languages which made translation into English very difficult. For example, in 1927, there were reports of difficulty in translating Hausa language into English during the language examination. The Deputy Commissioner of the Eastern Province complained to the Secretary of the Language Examination Board that:

Marking of the Hausa papers had been difficult owing to the fact that the knowledge of Hausa required to make a satisfactory translation of written papers in Hausa and English requires a considerable higher standard of knowledge of the language than that which was demanded of the candidates at Tamale in passing their oral tests.<sup>81</sup>

Even the successful candidates such as one Commissioner Miller who succeeded at the Tamale examination “was not sufficient to translate into Hausa the English written paper which

---

<sup>77</sup> Letter from the Principal, Achimota College, to the Acting Secretary for Native Affairs, 1 February, 1927, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/900.

<sup>78</sup> Letter from the Acting Principal, Achimota College, to the Secretary for Native Affairs, 14 September, 1927, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/900.

<sup>79</sup> Letter from the Secretary for Native Affairs to the Principal, 28 October, 1927, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/900.

<sup>80</sup> Letter from the Principal of Achimota to J. W. Newlands, Native Affairs Department, 14 January, 1927, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/900.

<sup>81</sup> Letter from the Deputy Commissioner, Eastern Province to the Secretary, the Language Examination Board, 1927, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1608, 1927, “Translation Papers – Hausa to English and English to Hausa.”

contained several difficult words and required a good knowledge of grammar and command of the language.”<sup>82</sup>

Finally, other British officials also received their training from the School of Oriental Studies (SOS) at the University of London. The duration of study was also a month. Usually, officers who were going on leave in London took advantage of the programme while they were in London. Officers such as Harold Graham Ardron of the Gold Coast Political Service received his one month’s training in the Hausa language at the SOS, London in 1927, and “made satisfactory progress in his knowledge of the language.”<sup>83</sup> Similarly, the District Commissioner of the Western Province also received his one-month training in the Mfantse language at the SOS, London in December that same year.<sup>84</sup>

On the question of the use of indigenous languages as the medium of instruction in schools, there was a shift in position in British attitudes in this regard. As already mentioned, the educational policy of 1882 attempted to restrict the use of local languages as the medium of instruction in schools in the Gold Coast. The use of local languages in schools was only limited to mission schools. Christian missionaries who used local languages before the 1920s were encouraged to use English if they were to access government grants. However, in the 1920s, this policy was changed totally. This was one of the recommendations of the Phelps-Stokes Commission of 1922 towards the improvement of education in British West Africa. It pushed for the use of local languages as the medium of instruction “in the lower primary classes

---

<sup>82</sup> Letter from the Deputy Commissioner, Eastern Province to the Secretary, the Language Examination Board, 1927, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1608.

<sup>83</sup> Certificate from the School of Oriental Studies, London, 4 November, 1927, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/900.

<sup>84</sup> Certificate from the School of Oriental Studies, London, 5 December, 1927, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/900.

and English at the upper primary classes.”<sup>85</sup> This was implemented in 1925.<sup>86</sup> The indigenous languages were now being used as the medium of instruction in schools.

It is important to state that the learning of indigenous languages in schools was given much support from traditional authorities who usually advocated for the learning of their languages in schools within their areas. For example, within the Ashanti area, Akuapem Twi was the dominant language which was taught in schools in that area in the 1940s. The Apagyahene of Kumasi, Nana Owusu Afriyie advocated for the teaching and learning of Asante Twi, rather than Akuapem Twi in Ashanti schools.<sup>87</sup> Nana Owusu Afriyie drew attention of colonial officials on the matter and argued that there were great differences between the two dialects, and children in Ashanti did not readily take to Akuapem Twi. The Director of Education acknowledged the views of Nana Owusu Afriyie but however stated that the unavailability of Asante Twi teachers was to blame for the situation.<sup>88</sup>

Also, in 1929 members of the Volta District Teachers’ Association made a similar request concerning the Dangme or Adangme language in their district. The teachers requested for the Dangme language to be taught in the schools in their district instead of the Ga language. To achieve this end the teachers formed the Adangme Language Committee (ALC). In a letter to the editor of the *Teacher’s Journal*, the secretary of the association, D. A. K. Ahulu, outlined some of the reasons why the association was formed;

- (i) The teachers here, like others elsewhere have realised the difficulties of teaching a foreign language effectively. Ga being more or less a foreign language as taught in Adangme schools has never been, so far successful as a language studied.

---

<sup>85</sup> Anyidoho and Dakubu. “Ghana: Indigenous Languages, English, and an Emerging National Identity,” 148.

<sup>86</sup> Owu-Ewie. “The Language Policy of Education in Ghana,” 77.

<sup>87</sup> Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Education Held in Court “C” of the Supreme Court, Accra, at 11am, 11 March, 1940, GH/PRAAD, ADM 11/1/816, 1918-1948, “Education Board Meetings (Case No. 9).”

<sup>88</sup> Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Education Held in Court “C” of the Supreme Court, Accra, at 11am, 11 March, 1940, GH/PRAAD, ADM 11/1/816.

(ii) According to Teachers' Journal no. 2 p. 52, vernacular has been defined as the language spoken by the children at home.

(iii) It is therefore the humble desire of the Adangme teachers to substitute for the Ga the Adangme which is their vernacular and which in the opinion of the language Committee, (Adangme), is reducible into modern script.<sup>89</sup>

The ALC further stated their readiness to produce works in Dangme for the schools such as specimen cards and illustrative stories.<sup>90</sup> Despite this initiative by the association the Education Department did not give its approval for the language to taught as a subject and used as the medium of instruction in the Volta District. Interestingly, the reason given by the department was the unavailability of literature in the language which the association had offered to produce.<sup>91</sup>

## **RESEARCH ON AND PUBLISHING IN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES**

The change in colonial administration's posture favouring the learning and usage of indigenous languages propelled more research on and publication in languages such as Ahanta, Brissa, Awutu, Mfantse, Nzema and Twi. The colonial officials collaborated with the educated elites and traditional rulers to research more into some of the languages spoken in the Gold Coast. More books, songs and histories were written and translated from English into local languages. Of course, not all the languages were given maximum attention. There were some works done by local authors which were not published or given much support. The excuse here was usually the lack of funds but this demonstrated the unwillingness of European officials to develop certain languages because it was spoken by only a few people. In the view of the

---

<sup>89</sup> Letter from D. A. K. Ahulu, Secretary of Adangme Language Committee to the Editor, *Teachers' Journal*, 19 February, 1929, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1456, 1925-1931, "Common Script for Gold Coast Vernaculars (Case No. 10)."

<sup>90</sup> Letter from D. A. K. Ahulu, Secretary of Adangme Language Committee to the Editor, *Teachers' Journal*, 19 February, 1929, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1456.

<sup>91</sup> Letter from A. W. Wilkie, Scottish Mission, to the Director of Education, H. A. A. Harman, 1929, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1456.

colonial officials, such languages were not ‘profitable’ to be reduced into writing as those languages were spoken by a small number of people. There were instances where natives and missionaries needed the assistance and approval of colonial officials to develop the orthographies of the languages of their localities but such demands were refused. However, as I shall demonstrate, it appears all the languages which were researched and worked on by colonial officials received maximum attention.

An example of the renewed interest for promoting local languages among Colonial officials was in the Eastern Province, where H. S. Newlands was highly commended by Governor Guggisberg for his efforts in researching into the languages spoken within the province in 1924. He conducted investigations in the Accra, Akwapim, Birrim, Ho, New Juaben, Quittah-Addah and Volta River Districts of the Eastern Province. Commissioner Newlands brought to the notice of the colonial government four main languages and their respective dialects spoken within the Accra, Akwapim, Birrim, New Juaben, Quittah-Addah and Volta River Districts namely; Twi (Akim, Ashanti), Ga, Adangme, Guang (Cherepong, Krobo) and Eve (Aflao, Agravi, Awuna, Peki). For the Ho District he found the languages and dialects to be Adangme, Ahlo, Akpafu, Avatime, Baika, Bowiri, Eve (Ho, Kpando), Guang, Lefana, Likpe, Logba, Lelobi, Njangbo, Santrokofi, Tafi, Tapa, Tetemang, Twi, Vlavlva, Anana, Avleketi, Hebieso, and Voduda.<sup>92</sup> In his concluding remarks, Newlands noted that in spite of the existence of these diverse languages, a traveller could venture into the area if they could speak either English or Hausa, as there were few towns and villages where these languages were not spoken. For the Ho town, in particular, he suggested that German could also be useful.

---

<sup>92</sup> “Eastern Province Languages,” *Gold Coast News No. 7*, Monday, 10 March, 1924, 1-2, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/867, 1924, “Languages Spoken in Eastern Province (Case No. 12).”

The Governor read Commissioner Newlands' work with much interest and directed for it to be published in the *Gold Coast News*.<sup>93</sup>

Another example from the Western Province was the bold attempt at popularizing the Brissa language by G. D. Chamberlain, the Acting District Commissioner of the Tarkwa District. In 1929, G. D. Chamberlain produced an account of the Brissa language spoken in the Western Province by the Aowin state. The language is a dialect of Akan and is a mixture of Sefwi, Nzema, and the languages across the French border.<sup>94</sup> In addition to the account on the Brissa language, and with the help from the chiefs,<sup>95</sup> Chamberlain also produced a short note on Brissa history and habits, a chapter on grammar and a vocabulary of over 1000 words. Being a government official, Chamberlain's work received much attention as about 200 copies were printed by the government printer at a cost of £25 in 1930.<sup>96</sup> Not only that, he was also awarded £15 for his efforts and the introductory remarks of his book were published in the *Gold Coast Review*, at the direction of Governor A. Ranford Slater.

The colonial government also showed interest in and supported publications by educated elites during this period. For example, between 1942 and 1949, the Director of Education assisted a native Mfantshipim teacher, H. E. Obeng-Addae, to publish an Mfantse translation of Edwin W. Smith's *Aggrey of Africa*. In 1942, Obeng-Addae wrote to the Director of Education to request for permission and approval to produce his manuscript.<sup>97</sup> In response, the Director instructed Obeng-Addae to seek permission from the publishers of Smith's work

---

<sup>93</sup> Letter from the Acting Secretary for Native Affairs, John Maxwell, to the Commissioner, Eastern Province, 7 March, 1924, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/867.

<sup>94</sup> Letter from the Acting Secretary for Native Affairs to the Colonial Secretary, 24 June, 1929, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1029, 1929-1933, "Brissa Language."

<sup>95</sup> Letter from the Acting District Commissioner, Tarkwa, G. D. Chamberlain to the Secretary for Native Affairs, 23 April, 1929, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1029.

<sup>96</sup> Letter from the Acting Secretary for Native Affairs to the Colonial Secretary, 24 June, 1929, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1029.

<sup>97</sup> Letter from H. E. Addae to the Director of Education, 4 August, 1942, GH/PRAAD/RG3/5/15, 1942-1949, "Twi Manuscripts."

before proceeding any further with his manuscript. Subsequently, it was the Director who wrote to the publishers, the Student Christian Movement Press Ltd, for their consent on behalf of Obeng-Addae.<sup>98</sup> Without charging any fees, the Student Christian Movement Press Ltd gave Obeng-Addae the go-ahead for his translation but only requested that he sent them two copies of the work after publication to be presented to Edwin Smith.<sup>99</sup> After Obeng-Addae had completed his final draft, the Director of Education had it examined by the Acting Principal of the Presbyterian Training College, Charles M. Morrison. Morrison gave a positive review of the manuscript and further recommended it to be an ideal reader for adult readers and text book for the upper classes of senior schools in the Gold Coast. After delays due in part to Dr Ida Ward's "Report on Investigation into Some Gold Coast Language Problems," Obeng-Addae's work was published in 1949 by Thomas Nelson and Sons.<sup>100</sup>

There were however a number of instances where restrictions were imposed by colonial officials in the publication and disseminating of written local languages. For example, in 1922, Rev. Gaddiel R. Acquah submitted three book manuscripts titled "Dual (Fante-English) Readers" to the colonial government for approval.<sup>101</sup> The books were to facilitate the teaching of English in the Fante-Akan Districts of the colony comprising Western Province, Akuapem, Akyem and Asante. Even before Guggisberg took over as Governor, Rev. Gaddiel R. Acquah was already in the process of preparing a compilation of Mfantse Proverbs at the request of Governor Hugh Clifford shortly before he left the colony. The three manuscripts of Rev. G. R.

---

<sup>98</sup> Letter from the Director of Education to the Student Christian Movement Press Ltd, 11 August, 1943, GH/PRAAD/RG3/5/15.

<sup>99</sup> Letter from the Student Christian Movement Press Ltd to the Director of Education, 26 October, 1943, GH/PRAAD/RG3/5/15.

<sup>100</sup> Letter from the Sales Manager, Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd to Tom Barton, Education Department, 2 March, 1949, GH/PRAAD/RG3/5/15.

<sup>101</sup> Letter from Rev. Gaddiel R. Acquah to the Colonial Secretary, 23 November, 1922, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1272, 1922-1954, "Native Languages and Literature (Revd. G. R. Acquah) (Case No. 40)."

Acquaah were rejected by colonial officials because, according to the Director of Education, “the books are not suitable for school children in their present form.”<sup>102</sup> Rev. G. R. Acquaah was referred to Mr. Balmer of the Wesleyan missionary on the subject of the books – Balmer had been invited into the Gold Coast to superintend the production of school and other books in the vernacular and in English.<sup>103</sup>

Even though this particular work of Rev. Acquaah was not supported by the colonial government, his efforts at promoting the Mfantse language through publications continued until his passing in 1954.<sup>104</sup> Some of his later works included *Comprehensive Fante Reader*, *Mfantse Mbebussem* in 1940,<sup>105</sup> *Oguaa Aban*, *Fante Amanbra*, and translations of *Rumpelstiltskin*, and *The Princess and the Frog*, with the Mfantse title *Ababaawa na Atwer*. He also published three biographies in Mfantse, namely: *Life of John Wesley*, *Life of St. Monica* and *Life of Florence Nightingale*. Finally, under the auspices of the British and Foreign Bible Society he translated the Bible into Mfantse.

These works by Rev. Acquaah reflect the interest of missionaries, especially the Wesleyan and Basel missions, in researching into and publishing in indigenous languages in the twentieth century. Indeed, between 1936 and 1938, Rev. Samuel Birikorang and Rev. H. J. Keteku of the Basel mission together with Dr E. L. Rapp revised, for the first time, Rev. J. G. Christaller, Rev. David Asante, and Rev. Jonathan Bekoe’s 1871 Akuapem Twi Bible.<sup>106</sup> Dr E. L. Rapp had arrived in the Gold Coast earlier in 1932 in the service of the Basel mission.

---

<sup>102</sup> Letter from the Commissioner of the Central Province to the Acting Secretary for Native Affairs, 12 February, 1923, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1272.

<sup>103</sup> Letter from the Commissioner of the Central Province to the Acting Secretary for Native Affairs, 12 February, 1923, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1272.

<sup>104</sup> “Rev. Acquaah is Buried.” *Daily Graphic*, Monday, 20 March, 1954, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1272.

<sup>105</sup> “Bibliography of Works in Ghana Languages.” BGL, Smith.

<sup>106</sup> “A Literary Work to Further Christian Evangelism,” *Gold Coast Weekly Review*, Vol. VI, No. 35, Wednesday, 29 August, 1956, 6.

He worked in Ashanti and subsequently at the Akropong Theological Seminary, and produced several books on African languages and theology.<sup>107</sup>

Also, in the 1940s, the Wesleyan mission, through its Standing Advisory Committee of the West African Literature Committee, also produced reading materials in the Mfantse language for schools in the Gold Coast. According to the steward of the Methodist Book Depot at the time, L. S. Pickard, these works were made due to the need for vernacular books during the 1940s.<sup>108</sup> The books included *Fante Word List and Rules of Spelling*, *Fante Grammar of Function Parts I and II* and *Fante Readers I to VII*. It is important to note that the *Fante Word List* or *Mfantse Nkasafua Nkyerewee* contained about ten thousand Mfantse words whereas the *Rules of Spelling* covered Mfantse pronouns, adjectives, verbs, vowels and consonants.<sup>109</sup>

One J. E. Mensah of Sese near Dixcove reduced the Ahanta language into writing and compiled a word-list with reading schemes for school children in 1942. Mensah's work needed the approval and support of the Department of Education for publication but colonial officials were not in support of such publications. He submitted the work to the Inspector of Schools through C. Irene Mason of the Methodist Book Depot. In Irene Mason's assessment the manuscript was of good quality and she entreated the Inspector of Schools to support Mensah to publish it.<sup>110</sup> However, the manuscript was one of two examples of works in the Ahanta language which had been turned down by colonial officials. Earlier in 1936, the Director of Education stated in assessing a manuscript in the language that "Ahanta is not a language that might profitably be reduced to writing."<sup>111</sup> The Director raised specific concerns about the poor

---

<sup>107</sup> "A Literary Work to Further Christian Evangelism," 6.

<sup>108</sup> Letter from the Steward of the Methodist Book Depot, L. S. Pickard, to the Director of Education, 20 March, 1942, GH/PRAAD/RG. 3/5/33, 1942-1944, "Fante Vocabulary List and Rules of Spelling by the Methodist Church (1942-1944)."

<sup>109</sup> Manuscript of *Fante Word List and Rules of Spelling*, GH/PRAAD/RG. 3/5/33.

<sup>110</sup> Letter from C. Irene Mason, Methodist Book Depot, to the Inspector of Schools, Western Province, 5 December, 1942, GH/PRAAD/RG3/5/209, 1936-1942, "Publication in Ahanta Language."

<sup>111</sup> Letter from the Assistant Director of Education, 23 December, 1936, GH/PRAAD/RG3/5/209.

state of the book “as it did not conform in any essential respect with the accepted modern methods of reading.”<sup>112</sup> It appears the department and other colonial officials were simply unwilling to develop the orthography of the Ahanta language because of the few number of people who spoke the language. Concerning Mensah’s manuscript, the Principal Inspector of schools in the Western Province advised the government that “he did not consider that the dialect, which he believes was akin to Nzima merited serious consideration,” as only some 3000 people spoke the Ahanta dialect.<sup>113</sup> In the end, the Director of Education agreed that the printing of materials for schools in Ahanta was not worthy of serious consideration.<sup>114</sup>

Similarly, in the 1930s, there were calls by the Omanhene of Winneba, Nana Ayirebi Acquah, to structure and standardize the Awutu or Effutu language. The Awutu or Effutu language is spoken by the natives of Winneba called Simpa.<sup>115</sup> Through the District Commissioner of the Winneba District, the Omanhene made his intentions known to the Director of Education. In 1936, the Director was willing to send a translation to the Omanhene of Winneba to assess whether it was accurate, as he was aware of the chief’s enthusiasm and competence for such an undertaking.<sup>116</sup> However, the Director was not very keen on the development of Awutu language learning, orthography and usage because it was spoken by a few people. In his words;

... since the Awutu language is spoken in a very small area, and since Fante is the language taught in the Winneba schools, I do not consider it advisable to give official

---

<sup>112</sup> Letter from the Assistant Director of Education, 23 December, 1936, GH/PRAAD/RG3/5/209.

<sup>113</sup> Letter from the Principal Inspector of Schools, Western Province, to the Secretary for Native Affairs, 8 December, 1942, GH/PRAAD/RG3/5/209.

<sup>114</sup> Letter from the Director of Education to the Secretary of Native Affairs, 11 December, 1942, GH/PRAAD/RG3/5/209.

<sup>115</sup> The Awutu or Effutu language is a Guan language spoken by Guan settlers of Winneba (Simpa) people and their Eastern neighbours, the Senya Bereku people respectively. See, George Panyin Hagan, *Divided We Stand: A Study of Social Change among the Effutu of Coastal Ghana*. No. 29. Department of History, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2000.

<sup>116</sup> Letter from the Acting Director of Education to the Director of Medical Services, 9 May 1936, GH/PRAAD/RG3/5/59, 1936, “Awutu Language (Efutu) (Case No. 3119).”

encouragement to the development of Awutu by sponsoring the printing of articles etc. written in that language.<sup>117</sup>

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the efforts of international agencies in promoting research into indigenous languages within this period. A more visible organisation in this regard was the International Institute of African Languages and Culture (IILC) stationed in London. The objective of the IILC was to “become a clearing house for all information regarding the study and research in African languages and cultures.”<sup>118</sup> The IILC endeavoured to put information about developments that were taking place in African language research and study at the disposal of their members. Specifically, the IILC disseminated information on issues such as work done on dictionaries, development in vernacular literature, legislation regarding the use of certain languages, discovery of unknown languages, notes on progressive and receding languages and anything to do with the question of lingua franca.<sup>119</sup> Such information was published in their quarterly journal, *Africa*, through the Oxford University Press. In 1928, the IILC wrote to the Colonial Secretary of the Gold Coast to appoint liaison officers through whom all enquiries from their territory would pass to the institute. Newlands was appointed by the government as the liaison officer to the Institute but the office of liaison officer was later on attached to the office of the Secretary of Native Affairs. The Institute usually made enquiries about the state of Gold Coast and other African languages for documentation and publication.

In 1930, for example, the Institute wrote to the Secretary of Native Affairs concerning their compilation of a list of people from different African territories who had studied the

---

<sup>117</sup> Letter from the Acting Director of Education to the Director of Medical Services, 9 May 1936, GH/PRAAD/RG3/5/59.

<sup>118</sup> Letter from the Secretary-General of the IILC, Hanns Vischer, to the Colonial Secretary, 13 February, 1928, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1007, 1928-1933, “International Institute of African Languages and Cultures (Case No. 26).”

<sup>119</sup> Notes of the IILC to its Correspondents, 1928, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1007.

various languages of those territories, whom the institute could consult on issues relating to those languages.<sup>120</sup> The Acting SNA at the time, C. E. Skene first compiled a list of languages and their experts and submitted them to his predecessor, Newlands, including Hausa and Adangme. However, Newlands pointed out to him that those two languages were to be omitted because Hausa was not a Gold Coast language whereas Adangme was a dialect of Ga.<sup>121</sup>

Indeed, the Secretary of Native Affairs supplied names for six languages namely Twi, Fante, Ga, Dagomba, Mole and Ewe.<sup>122</sup> In a publication in the IALC's *Africa*, one of the directors of the institute, Professor D. Westermann, suggested that every one of all the larger languages must have its own magazine. This suggestion was taken into consideration by the Education Department. For the Twi magazine, the Director of Education, H. A. A. Harman referred the matter to the staff of the Presbyterian Training College at Akropong in order to get their views. M. A. Obeng, a native teacher at the college and member of the Twi Sub-Committee of the Textbook Committee, expressed his support for the publication and suggested that the Twi magazine should cover topics such as the history of various ethnic groups in the Gold Coast, customs and folklore, interpretation of drum music, native proverbs,

---

<sup>120</sup> Letter from the Secretary-General of the IALC to the Secretary of Native Affairs, 1 April, 1930, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1007.

<sup>121</sup> Correspondence between the Secretary of Native Affairs, C. E. Skene, and his predecessor Secretary Newlands, 28 April, 1930 and 19 May, 1930, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1007.

<sup>122</sup> For the Twi language, the AG. SNA named the following as experts; Mr. A. G. Fraser of Achimota, Dr A. W. Wilkie of the Scottish Mission, and Mr. J. A. Prendergast, the Assistant District Commissioner. For the Fante language, the following experts were named; Mr. H. C. Neill of Achimota, Rev. G. R. Acquah of the Wesleyan Mission and the Rev. J. B. Anaman of the Nigritian Church. For the Ga language, Mrs. A. W. Wilkie of the Scottish Mission and Major H. A. Harman of the Education Department were named. Mr. E. O. Rake, the Provincial Commissioner of the Northern Province and Mr. H. A. Blair, the assistant District commissioner were named experts for the Dagomba language. Captain V. J. Lynch and Mr. A. W. Cardinall, both District Commissioners in the North also studied the Mole language. Finally, Rev. Paul Wiegrave of the Scottish Mission was named for his studies on the Ewe language, Letter from Acting SNA to the Secretary-General of the IALC, 22 May, 1930, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1007.

plays for children, etc, and the cost of such a magazine should be borne by government.<sup>123</sup> The SNA advised that the committee working on such a Twi magazine must obtain the consent and permission of chiefs and traditional leaders in those areas. The publication of the Twi magazine however, did not materialize in the long run, as some provincial officials were of the opinion that “the literate people of this country take little interest in publications in the vernacular consequently at the present times.”<sup>124</sup> Evidently, this was not the view held by the ‘literate’ native teachers at the Presbyterian Training College at Akropong.

## **STANDARDISATION OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE ORTHOGRAPHIES**

As stated earlier, missionaries and educated elites had already developed orthographies of some Gold Coast languages. The disparities and gulf between the orthographies of Gold Coast languages caused the colonial officials to endeavour to standardize the orthographies of some of the major languages in the Gold Coast. For example, the Mfantse language had been reduced to writing and published in different principles from those which guided the publishers of Twi literature. This is notwithstanding the fact that Mfantse and Twi speakers could understand themselves everywhere. Thus, Mfantse and Twi speakers could not read books written in each other’s language. The colonial government planned to resolve this problem by providing a common script for Gold Coast languages including Ewe, Ga, Mfantse and Twi. The standardization of indigenous languages, especially Mfantse and Twi, was one of the

---

<sup>123</sup> Letter from the Director of Education, H. A. A. Harman to the Secretary for Native Affairs, 20 February, 1930, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1007.

<sup>124</sup> Letter from the Secretary for Native Affairs to the Director of Education, 11 June, 1930, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1007.

proposals of the Educationist Committee of 1920, more specifically at the request of Nana Ofori Atta.<sup>125</sup>

Between 1921 and 1933, the colonial government made several attempts to deal with this issue of standardization. In 1921, Governor Guggisberg formed a Committee, with R. S. Rattray as chairman, to undertake the standardization, but this was unsuccessful because Rattray was unavailable.<sup>126</sup> Again in 1924, the Secretary for Native Affairs, C. W. Welman, took it upon himself to chair a series of conferences of Government and Mission representatives to come up with the way forward for the standard orthography. Members of the successive committees formed at the conferences included native unofficial members of the Legislative Council such as Casely Hayford, Nana Ofori Atta, Nana Amonoo V of Anomabo and E. J. P. Brown. Omanhene Ofori Atta later suggested two persons to be added to the committees - Rev. James Birikorang, native minister, Scottish Mission stationed at Kwaben, Akyem Abuakwa and Thomas Yao Kusi, councillor attached to the tribunal of the Omanhene of Akyem Abuakwa, Kyebi. Nana Amonoo V also later suggested the inclusion of the Rev. J. B. Anaman, Rev. G. R. Acquah, J. P. Brown and S. H. Brew to the committees. At the suggestion of the Principle of Achimota, A. G. Fraser, in 1925, Professor Diedrich Westermann was invited by the government to join the committees in their work, as he had spent some time in studying the Ewe, Mfantse and Twi languages.<sup>127</sup> Professor Westermann subsequently visited the Gold Coast twice in 1927 and 1929.

---

<sup>125</sup> Account on the Genesis of the Akan Script by J. C. de Graft Johnson, 26 April, 1932, GH/PRAAD/CSO18/1/83, 1931-1940, "New Script for Languages Spoken on the Gold Coast."

<sup>126</sup> Letter from the Acting Secretary for Native Affairs to the Colonial Secretary, 27 June, 1923, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1456, 1921-1924, "Standardization of Fante and Akan Languages (Case No. 7)."

<sup>127</sup> Letter from the Principal of Achimota, A. G. Fraser, to the Governor, 17 November 1925, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1456, 1925-1931, "Common Script for Gold Coast Vernaculars (Case No. 10)."

In 1930, a set of new and standardized symbols were compiled and published by Professor Westermann in a pamphlet titled *The New Script and its Relation to the Language of the Gold Coast*, for supply to schools for teaching and learning purposes. This was also referred to as the Westermann Script.<sup>128</sup> In the preface of the pamphlet, the Acting Director of Education, H. A. A. Harman, made it clear that the compiler, Professor Westermann, did not wish to impose “upon any section of the community ideas which are alien to the spirit of their own languages.”<sup>129</sup> The symbols of the new script, to be used in writing Ga, Ewe, Mfantse and Twi, were categorised into three. The first was the printed form which were used in books and found on typewriters. The second was the cursive form of handwriting, used in ordinary cursive handwriting where letters were joined together to form a word. The final was the script form of handwriting which was to be used by school children and it bore close relation to the printed form but in a simple form.<sup>130</sup>

The use of the Westermann script faced criticisms from both traditional rulers and educated elites in the Gold Coast. Firstly, Professor Westermann introduced three new symbols ‘ɔ’, ‘ɛ’ and ‘ɲ’ symbols into the Akan languages (in both Mfantse and Twi). The new introduction was criticised, for instance, by the Akan Languages Association (ALA) of the Eastern Province section, Accra.<sup>131</sup> The ALA did not see the essence of the introduction of ‘ɔ’ and ‘ɛ’. In the view of the ALA, the Roman characters ‘e’ and ‘o’ represented these sounds very well in the old text. In the opinion of the Chief Commissioner of Ashanti, some members of the educated elites opposed the new letters because they viewed their addition as a deliberate

---

<sup>128</sup> Report of the Textual Committee, 13 December, 1932, GH/PRAAD/CSO18/1/83.

<sup>129</sup> *The New Script and Its Relation to the Languages of the Gold Coast*, Issued by the Education Department, Gold Coast, April, 1930, GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1456, 1926-1929, “Standardization of Akan and Fante Languages (Case No. 15).”

<sup>130</sup> An example of the script form of handwriting is given for the letter “g” for which no one writes with completed tail rail but appears in its printed forms.

<sup>131</sup> After the work of Westermann was published, it was examined by stakeholders from the Western, Eastern, Central and Ashanti provinces.

attempt to make Akan languages inferior languages as the letters in question were not used in writing the English language.<sup>132</sup> However, the ALA acknowledged the utility of having distinct African or Akan symbols to represent their sounds and language but they were of the view that it was not advisable to do so;

If symbols, peculiarly African, could have been invented, perhaps it might have been more acceptable, but now that even the Turks and Chinese who have their own system of writing are making efforts to write their respective languages by employing the same Roman characters that have now become familiar with us, it seems most inadvisable for us to adopt unfamiliar symbols.<sup>133</sup>

Secondly, the 1930 Westermann script was opposed by sections of the Akan people because it proposed the usage of some common words between Mfantse and Twi speakers. For example, it proposed Twi speakers write ‘mba’ for ‘mma’ (children), ‘nda’ for ‘nna’ (days), ‘ndua’ for ‘nnua’ (trees) and ‘nguan’ for ‘nnwan’ (sheep).<sup>134</sup> The Eastern Provincial Council opposed such changes as they felt the adoption of such changes would mean a change ‘in substance’ of the Twi language. Indeed, the introduction of new words went beyond the request made by Nana Ofori Atta, earlier in 1920, for there to be uniformity in the orthographies of the closely related Akan languages. Nana Ofori Atta, President of Eastern Provincial Council in 1931, expressed his disapproval and that of his council to the Westermann script in a letter to the Commissioner of the Eastern Province by stating that;

There would have been little ground for complaints if Professor Westermann had concerned himself with spelling of words so as to make the same words more or less uniform, though we consider that even in his attempt to introduce a system of spelling corresponding to the Greeks, he was not successful as the new system makes writing more difficult and quite irreconcilable. But once the Professor put on a magnifying glass

---

<sup>132</sup> Letter from the Chief Commissioner of Ashanti to the Colonial Secretary, 20 July, 1932, GH/PRAAD/CSO18/1/83, 1931-1932, New Script for Languages Spoken on the Gold Coast.

<sup>133</sup> Report of the Akan Language Association, Eastern Province Section, Accra, GH/PRAAD/CSO18/1/83.

<sup>134</sup> Report of the Joint Committee of the Fanti Bible Transcript Committee and the Akan Language Association convened at Cape Coast, Saturday, 13 February, 1932, GH/PRAAD/CSO18/1/83.

and tried to change in substance certain words used by the people, we submit that the Professor embarked on a task...to force upon the country his own new words which has aroused the indignation of the people...and who therefore regard it as a slur on their national outlook... Our hostility to, and condemnation of, the New Script is so uncompromising that the adulterated language as brought about by the Professor should not be forced unto the minds of the young generation by means of teaching in the Schools.<sup>135</sup>

Not surprisingly, the Mfantse Sub-Committee, however, accepted this change on the basis that they were etymologically and philologically right. According to them, “if our Twi brethren could dispassionately and without undue prejudice examine such words both etymologically and philologically, they will no doubt find that the grounds for their opposition are untenable.”<sup>136</sup> They therefore advocated for compromise “by letting each other continue to write the forms with which they are already familiar (even interchangeably) until such time that one or other form would imperceptibly drop out.”<sup>137</sup>

To resolve these concerns, the Governor in 1932 directed the Education Department to set up the ‘Textual Committee’ made up of Director of Education as chairman and other members such as H. L. Neil of Achimota, J. C. de Graft Johnson, W. D. Opare of Achimota and F. K. Potakey of Achimota. The committee was to specifically answer the following questions;

- a. Whether the following letters of the English alphabet viz; a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, I, k, (l), m, n, o, p, r, s, t, u, v, w, y, z; together with diagraphs dw, dz, gy, hw, hy, kw, ky, ny, tw, ts are adequate to express every sound in the language or as far as possible.

---

<sup>135</sup> Letter from the Hon. Nana Ofori Atta to the Commissioner of the Eastern Province, 30 July, 1931, GH/PRAAD/CSO18/1/83.

<sup>136</sup> Report of the Joint Committee of the Fanti Bible Transcript Committee and the Akan Language Association convened at Cape Coast, Saturday, 13 February, 1932, GH/PRAAD/CSO18/1/83.

<sup>137</sup> Report of the Joint Committee of the Fanti Bible Transcript Committee and the Akan Language Association convened at Cape Coast, Saturday, 13 February, 1932, GH/PRAAD/CSO18/1/83.

- b. Whether the peculiar symbols  $\epsilon$ ,  $\circ$  and  $\eta$  are absolutely necessary. For example, whether there is any reason, scientific or other, why 'benkum' should be written 'benkum' (left)...
- c. Whether there is real objection, scientific other, to the plural of 'ba' or 'da', whether standing by itself or used as a prefix or suffix, being spelt 'mma' or 'nna' instead of 'mba' or 'nda' or why 'ngo' (oil) should be written 'nno'<sup>138</sup>

After deliberations, the Committee with the exception of de Graft Johnson, answered questions 'a' in the negative and 'b' in the affirmative. They were of the view that answering questions 'a' and 'b' amounted to questioning the utility of the Westermann Script. To answer the first question, the committee were of the opinion that the English alphabets were not adequate to express every sound in the Akan language. They therefore agreed that the Westermann Script with its new symbols were necessary as it was of great advantage for school purposes and from that aspect, it was desirable to retain it. They further pointed out that the Westermann Script had been "adopted for fifteen African languages outside the Gold Coast" thus, "it would be an unfortunate gesture if the Gold Coast were to abandon the Westermann script..."<sup>139</sup>

On the last question, the committee, once again with the exception of de Graft Johnson, agreed with the Westermann Script. They pointed out the fact that Mfantse usually writes 'mb' and 'nd' but Twi does not. For de Graft Johnson, by writing 'mba' and 'nda' instead of 'mma' and 'nna', the root words 'ba' and 'da' were maintained.<sup>140</sup> Moreover, de Graft Johnson further argued that the English alphabets presented above were just enough to express the sounds of the Mfantse language and there was no need for new vowels.

---

<sup>138</sup> Letter from Colonial Secretary, Mr. J. A. Jones, to the Acting Director of Education, 7 December 1932, GH/PRAAD/CSO18/1/83.

<sup>139</sup> Report of the Textual Committee, 13 December, 1932, GH/PRAAD/CSO18/1/83.

<sup>140</sup> Letter from J. C. de Graft Johnson to the Director of Education, 14 December, 1932, GH/PRAAD/CSO18/1/83.

Following the report of the Textual Committee, Governor T. Shenton W. Thomas accepted the advice of Director of Education, and the Westermann Script was adopted in April, 1933.<sup>141</sup> Opposition to the script however continued after this decision, especially amongst the educated elites.<sup>142</sup> For example in 1939, Safuhin D. K. T. Sarbah, editor of *The Gold Coast Farmer and Review*, in a letter to the Secretary of the Royal African Society at the Imperial Institute, conveyed his concerns about the negative effect of the script on African languages in general, and how the three new symbols, ‘ɔ’, ‘ɛ’ and ‘ɲ,’ impeded the proper development of Akan languages in particular.<sup>143</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Beginning in 1919, there was a renewed interest from colonial officials into the promotion of indigenous languages in the Gold Coast. The policy of indirect rule required an in-depth study of local languages. Thus, the colonial policy of requiring political officers to learn at least one indigenous language was strengthened. Under Governor Guggisberg, this policy was tied to promotion of political officers in the colony. The Board of Examination organised examinations for political officers in this regard. Secondly, the policy of the missionaries of teaching with indigenous languages in schools was adopted by the colonial government from 1925, after both the 1920 Educationists’ Committee and 1922 the Phelps-Stocks commission report on education advocated for it. Furthermore, more research into indigenous languages was promoted within this period. Educated elites, missionaries and colonial officials researched and published extensively into local languages. This was complemented by the work of the IIALC, an international institute which promoted research

---

<sup>141</sup> Letter from the Colonial Secretary to Commissioners, Ashanti, Central Province, Eastern Province, and Western Province, 29 April, 1933, GH/PRAAD/CSO18/1/83.

<sup>142</sup> Letter from the Director of Education to the Colonial Secretary, 16 January, 1940, GH/PRAAD/CSO18/1/83.

<sup>143</sup> Letter from Safuhin D. K. T. Sarbah, Editor of *The Gold Coast Farmer and Review*, to the Secretary of the Royal African Society, the Imperial Institute, 8 November, 1939, GH/PRAAD/CSO18/1/83.

through their journal, *Africa*. Finally, to make the orthography of local languages uniform, an attempt was made to standardise the orthographies of indigenous languages from the 1920s. Criticisms and complaints from the locals were borne in the fact that in an attempt to standardise the orthographies of the languages, it appears Professor D. Westermann attempted to change some pronunciations, and introduce new alphabets in the orthography of some local languages.

Despite all these, to merely state that the colonial officials were interested in the development of local languages without any further explanation was simplistic. Obviously, the renewed interest to compel political officers to study local languages and also to teach with local languages in schools was a means to an end. Thus, this was to ensure effective administration of the Gold Coast through the indirect rule system. This is evident in the fact that, as demonstrated above, not all the languages were found very useful to be developed. Only local languages spoken by a considerable large number of the people were attended to. Indeed, even when educated elites pushed for the publication of languages, such as Ahanta and Awutu, colonial officials were reluctant to promote such languages.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### LANGUAGE PLANNING DURING THE ERA OF DECOLONISATION, 1946-1957

#### INTRODUCTION

Up until the end of the Second World War, language planning was shaped and largely influenced by the policy of indirect rule. Thus, more attention was paid to the development of some local languages in terms of orthographies, their usage as medium of instruction at the early stages of education and the learning of these languages as subjects in Gold Coast schools. Missionaries, educated elites, and colonial officials all played their respective roles in developing one local language or another. Meanwhile, English still remained the official language of the colony used to conduct government business and education after the first three stages. After 1945, the intensification of decolonisation in the Gold Coast also influenced language planning. A major development was the 1946 Alan Burns Constitution. This constitution established a majority of unofficial Africans in the Legislative Assembly.<sup>144</sup>

One major issue that emerged during this period was the debate on what language to be adopted as the official language in the new state after independence. Whiles some argued for the maintenance of English language as the official language, others were of the opinion that a local language should be adopted as the Gold Coast's official language. This chapter discusses these debates to examine why English was maintained as the Gold Coast's official language after independence in 1957. Much was not done in terms of developing orthographies of indigenous languages during this period. Much of the work went into expanding literature and usage of indigenous languages in two main ways. First was the establishment of the Vernacular

---

<sup>144</sup> Suret-Canale and Adu Boahen. "West Africa, 1945-60," 167.

Literature Bureau (VLB) in 1951 to publish works in indigenous languages. And secondly, there were improvements in the usage of indigenous languages in the media, namely through radio broadcast at the Gold Coast Broadcasting Service (GCBS), which was established earlier in 1935.

### **INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE USAGE IN BROADCASTING: THE GOLD COAST BROADCASTING SERVICE (GCBS)**

Even though newspapers existed as early as the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was not until the 1935 that the Gold Coast Broadcasting Service (GCBS) was established in the Gold Coast. As the first radio station, the GCBS revolutionised the media landscape in the Gold Coast. It did not only communicate in English but also in indigenous languages. When the GCBS was first established in 1935, the service was limited to a few subscribers who paid for radio broadcast service. An amount of 10 shillings was paid as subscription fee before the beginning of the Second World War. In 1935, the GCBS connected 300 subscribers and by the end of that same year a total of 750 subscribers were connected to the service. The broadcast service in Accra was later expanded to other parts of the country. For example, it reached Cape Coast in February 1936, Sekondi-Takoradi in December 1936 and Kumasi in April 1937.<sup>145</sup> The programmes relayed consisted of music and talks from overseas shortwave broadcasting stations (prominence being given to Daventry), and local programmes like songs by choirs, short recitals of music by instrumentalists, talks produced by local artistes, selections of gramophone records, folk stories for children, talks on public health and agriculture, broadcasts on important ceremonial and sporting events and a local news bulletin were featured on the radio.

---

<sup>145</sup> Chapter X - Communications and Transport, 66, GH/PRAAD/CSO7/1/2, “Gold Coast Annual General Report, 1935-36.”

It is important to note that the dominant language of communication in the early years of GCBS was English. This point was succinctly made by A. E. Attafuaah who was a Member of the Legislative Assembly;

...there were sixty hours of English broadcast every week and only 15½ hours vernacular broadcasts; and even then the vernacular broadcasts were usually given when most people were at work, whilst at the time they were at home, which was in the evenings, broadcasts were all in English and since 90 per cent of the population was illiterate, they were not getting enough benefits.<sup>146</sup>

However, reforms in the GCBS led to an improvement in the use of some selected local languages from the 1950s. In 1953, the Legislative Assembly set up a commission to make recommendations for the improvement of broadcasting services in the Gold Coast. The commission came out with their report that very year titled the “Report of the Broadcasting Commission.”<sup>147</sup> Among other things, the government separated the Broadcasting Service from the Information Service Department. It also sought to expand the number of listeners throughout the Gold Coast. It wanted to move away from the subscription formula where “majority of the listeners get their programmes” when “their houses are connected by direct lines to the broadcasting station.”<sup>148</sup> This was also called the rediffusion system. For the first time, the government introduced the supply of cheap wireless sets and batteries ranging from £6 to £9.

For language development, based on the Commission’s recommendations, the government of the day agreed that the GCBS “would broadcast in English and in the six main vernacular languages of the Gold Coast, namely, Ewe, Ga, Fanti, Twi, Dagbani and Hausa.”<sup>149</sup>

---

<sup>146</sup> “Broadcasting: Plans Are Accepted for Improvement.” *Gold Coast Weekly Review*, Vol. III, No. 30, Wednesday, 29 July 1953: 2.

<sup>147</sup> “Broadcasting: Plans Are Accepted for Improvement,” 2.

<sup>148</sup> “Broadcasting: Plans Are Accepted for Improvement,” 2.

<sup>149</sup> “Broadcasting: Plans Are Accepted for Improvement,” 2.

Thus, in terms of language usage in the media, the Convention People's Party led government, just like the erstwhile British colonial officials, prioritised some local languages as languages of communication in the media. The commission also recommended that there should be "regional broadcasting stations at Tamale, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi, Accra and Ho which would broadcast in the language of each region."<sup>150</sup> In all this, English was used side-by-side with the local languages to strike a balance. News was cast in both the six local languages of the regions of the Gold Coast and in the English language. News in the local languages was broadcast at 6:30 am, 12:15 pm, 4:30 pm and 7:15 pm. English language news was also broadcast at 6:00 am, 1:00 pm, 6:00 pm, 8:00 pm, 9:00 pm and 10:00 pm.<sup>151</sup>

### **EXPANSION IN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE LITERATURE: THE VERNACULAR LITERATURE BUREAU (VLB)**

In the print media, the Vernacular Literature Bureau (VLB), which is now the Bureau of Ghana Languages (BGL), gave much impetus to the expansion of literature for local languages. The Bureau was set up in 1951 as "an independent statutory corporation by the Gold Coast Vernacular Literature Board Ordinance 1950 (as amended by Ordinance No. 44 of 1951)."<sup>152</sup> Its main objective was to produce literature in the various Gold Coast languages.<sup>153</sup> By 1952-3, the Bureau had succeeded in the production of a large quantity of primers and vernacular newspapers produced in the six main Gold Coast languages namely Ewe, Mfantse, Ga, Twi, Dagbani and Kasem.<sup>154</sup> From October 1951 to March 1952, 157, 700 copies of

---

<sup>150</sup> "Broadcasting: Plans Are Accepted for Improvement," 2.

<sup>151</sup> Nkrumah. *A History of Language Policy in Ghana*, 56-57.

<sup>152</sup> *The Bureau of Ghana Languages at a Glance*, BGL, 1996: 1.

<sup>153</sup> Vernacular Literature Board Ordinance, No. 27 of 1950; 38, GH/PRAAD/ADM4/1/239, 1950, "Annual Volume the Laws of the Gold Coast Containing all Legislation Enacted During the Year."

<sup>154</sup> "Literature Bureau Reviews Its First Year's Work." *Gold Coast Weekly Review*, Vol. III, No. 6, Wednesday, 11 February, 1953: 4.

vernacular newspapers were produced.<sup>155</sup> The Bureaus also produced vernacular manuscripts on specific subjects. In 1952, it produced 45 manuscripts in Ewe, 58 in Twi, 12 in Mfantse and 8 each in Ga and Adangbe.<sup>156</sup>

Through its role in the Mass Education work by the Mass Education Unit of the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, the VLB was aware of the existing challenge in publishing literature in the local language, and were willing to solve it.<sup>157</sup> The “Mass Education Campaign” took the form of Adult Education and was very useful because it disseminated the works of the VLB to the general public, emphasising to its readers the importance of indigenous languages and culture as well as the literary works of the Bureau. The campaign was also an important avenue where the Mass Education teams taught the general public some basic skills in reading in the various indigenous languages so that the general public could better appreciate and benefit from the literary work of the Bureau. It is important to note that one of the damning challenges of the Bureau was the difficulty in the distribution of newspapers throughout the country. The vernacular newspapers of the Bureau were published once in a month. Even though the Bureau had some agents for the selling of the newspapers, and even operated the book vans belonging to the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, there was still the need for a wider network and a more efficient system of distribution.<sup>158</sup>

Apart from government support, the VLB also received support from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) right from its

---

<sup>155</sup> Of these, 54,000 were in Ewe, 23,700 were in Mfantse, 24,500 in Ga, 53,500 in Twi, 522 in Dagbani and 264 in Kasem.

<sup>156</sup> “Literature Bureau Reviews Its First Year’s Work,” 4

<sup>157</sup> “Vernacular Literature Bureau Plans to Expand Production.” *Gold Coast Weekly Review*, Vol. III, No. 48, Wednesday, 2 December, 1953: 1.

<sup>158</sup> Bankole, “Our National Languages,” 5.

inception.<sup>159</sup> As an organization established in 1945 to, amongst other things, preserve all world languages,<sup>160</sup> it assisted the Bureau in terms of personnel, equipment and finances. Indeed, the first three directors of the Bureau were provided by UNESCO at the request of the Gold Coast government. These include R. C. Whitaker (Director: 1951-1953), John A. Hamilton (Acting Director: 1953-1956) and Edwin L. Read Jr. (Director: 1956-1958).<sup>161</sup> Not only that, UNESCO also supplied the VLB with editors and experts in visual aids for the production of their publications.

Also, in 1953, Mr. Don Sugathapala of the Royal Preparatory School, attached to the Royal College of Colombo, Ceylon, arrived in the Gold Coast and stayed up till six months under UNESCO's programme of assistance to mass education in the Gold Coast. Mr Sugathapala had been concerned in the preparation of vernacular literature back in Ceylon and was the editor of 'Nava Maga-' a Sinhalese literacy quarterly of new writing. During his stay, Mr. Sugathapala gave in-service training to the editors of the Vernacular Literature Bureau "in the techniques of vernacular literature production, with particular reference to "follow up" literature and vernacular newspapers for those made literate by the Mass Education teams."<sup>162</sup> Mr. Sugathapala also took active part in the literacy campaign of the Mass Education teams as they utilized the Bureau's publications.

UNESCO continued its unflinching support to the Bureau by providing it with technical and financial assistance. In 1955 for example, the government liaised with UNESCO to supply the Bureau with four experts and funds. The experts were to serve for a three-year period, thus

---

<sup>159</sup> "The Bureau of Ghana Languages-BGL." Retrieved from ([www.ghanaculture.gov.gh](http://www.ghanaculture.gov.gh)-29/05/2006) on 29/09/2018 at 17:56.

<sup>160</sup> Interview with Moses J. Appleh, Head of Ga Section of the BGL, 02-05-2019, BGL Office, Accra.

<sup>161</sup> Interview with Peter Essien, Deputy Director and Former Director of the BGL, 13-09-2019, BGL Office, Accra.

<sup>162</sup> "UNESCO Expert Has Arrived." *Gold Coast Weekly Review*, Vol. III, No. 25, Wednesday, 24 June 1953: 4.

from 1956 to 1958, as Acting Director; Director on sales and distribution; Editor to help in the training of editors and the production of materials for a three-year period; and Visual Aids Expert.<sup>163</sup> For the role of the Editor, Ella W. Griffin was sent by UNESCO.<sup>164</sup> The organisation also awarded fellowships for four members of staff of the Bureau to be trained as editors abroad in 1956.<sup>165</sup> Again, in 1955, UNESCO donated \$10,000 to the Bureau to aid it in the acquisition of experimental supplies and equipment. Finally, in 1957, the organisation supplied the Bureau with a Rota print machine to enable them to print their smaller publications on their own.<sup>166</sup>

### **DISCOURSE ON THE SELECTION OF AN INDIGENOUS OFFICIAL LANGUAGE FOR POST-COLONIAL GOLD COAST**

After the end of the Second World War, nationalists in the Gold Coast and Africa as a whole began to intensify the process of contesting European colonial rule. The War and its aftermath played a crucial role in this idea of decolonization. In the Gold Coast, by 1952, Internal Self-Government had been attained. Kwame Nkrumah was voted into office as the Prime Minister of the Gold Coast with African members of cabinet in 1952. Self-government was imminent and the leaders of the colony had to brace themselves up to face the difficult questions of governance. Among the many issues which confronted the nationalists was the language question. As demonstrated above, the Gold Coast was a multilingual colony with many vernaculars spoken by its people. English language had also been introduced through

---

<sup>163</sup> Memorandum from M. S. Adiseshiah, Assistant Director-General UNESCO, to Directors and Heads of Bureaux and Services, 6 August, 1955, GH/PRAAD/RG17/1/22, 1955-1961, “UNO, UNESCO, ILO, etc. (6/8/55-20/2/61).”

<sup>164</sup> Memorandum from M. S. Adiseshiah, Assistant Director-General UNESCO, to Directors and Heads of Bureaux and Services, 6 August, 1955, GH/PRAAD/RG17/1/22.

<sup>165</sup> Memorandum from M. S. Adiseshiah, Assistant Director-General UNESCO, to Directors and Heads of Bureaux and Services, 6 August, 1955, GH/PRAAD/RG17/1/22.

<sup>166</sup> Interview with Peter Essien, Deputy Director and Former Director of the BGL, 13-09-2019, BGL Office, Accra.

European intervention and had become a firm language of communication, trade, education, governance and power by the 1950s.

This final section examines how nationalists and the people of the Gold Coast in general negotiated and settled on the English language as the official language of the independent Gold Coast, to be renamed Ghana,<sup>167</sup> at the eve of independence. It pays attention to the arguments and suggestions made in shaping the national language to be adopted after independence. The major question to be answered was whether English should be maintained as the official language or one indigenous language should be chosen as the national language amidst the many options of indigenous languages in the Gold Coast. As would be seen, some commentators were less radical as they did not see how a choice could be made from the multitude of tongues one could find in the Gold Coast. In the view of one newspaper columnist, the English language was already on its way to becoming a lingua franca so why not let it?<sup>168</sup> Most of these debates were captured in newspaper articles and legislative council debates.

Even though the decolonization period was a period where much anti-colonial sentiments were expressed, there were no suggestions for the outright elimination of the English language after independence. For example, F. M. K. Dzradosi who was a columnist for the *Daily Graphic* newspaper advocated for the adoption of a national language immediately after independence. By a national language, Dzradosi meant any one of the indigenous languages. In the view of Dzradosi, three conditions needed to be met before such an indigenous language must be adopted. First, the population of the various vernacular-speaking groups needed to be considered. If a language was to be chosen to become a national language, then it was supposed to be spoken by a fair majority of the people. Second, Dzradosi

---

<sup>167</sup> “Legislative Assembly Adopts Motion for Independence.” *Gold Coast Weekly Review*, Vol. VI, No. 33, Wednesday, 15 August, 1956: 1.

<sup>168</sup> G. Adali-Mortty. “A National Language?” *Daily Graphic*, 25 January, 1954: 5.

considered the relations between one vernacular and the other. Since many indigenous languages were mutually intelligible, choosing a language which had many similarities with other languages was only prudent. Finally, Dzradosi placed much emphasis on the state of development of the orthography of such a language. As a national language and official language, the orthography of the selected language needed to be standardized for easy use in schools and official documentation.

Based on these conditions, a wide range of languages were automatically disqualified in Dzradosi's criteria. It would be recalled that the development of the orthographies of languages of the Gold Coast was only limited to a few languages. For example, the development of the orthographies of Guan languages was not given much attention. In his final choice of the language which was to become the official language of an independent Gold Coast, Dzradosi was in the web of two important choices. He was caught between choosing a language which was very popular, spoken by a fairly large section of the people and more connected with other languages, on the one hand, and secondly choosing a language which had a far more advanced orthography. Twi was widely spoken in the Southern Gold Coast and easily connected with other languages such as Mfantse. However, issues of the standardization of the Twi language had not been completely settled even though the Westermann script had been approved and accepted. German missionaries in the 1890s had put in much efforts in the development of the Ewe orthographies. Yet, Dzradosi suggested the selection of Twi as national language for the future independent Gold Coast state due to its advantages explained above. In the words of Dzradosi;

The major vernaculars, one of which could be adopted, are Hausa, Dagbani, Ewe, Twi, Ga and Fanti. After taking the above-mentioned factors into consideration, it seems Twi would be a reasonable choice. Ewe, however, is the most developed in literature and

more standardised than any other vernacular in the country, but considering the close connection between Twi, Fanti and other Akan vernaculars, Twi should be preferred.<sup>169</sup>

Indeed, Dzradosi acknowledged the challenges such a choice held in the future. Dzradosi acknowledged that jealousy, tribal prejudices and a lukewarm attitude was to be expected to develop towards the language at first as the language of the adopted vernacular would dominate other languages in the country.<sup>170</sup> For Dzradosi, such a problem would be solved with time as other vernaculars would be used normally every day for unofficial discourse.

English was also going to be used side by side with the national language until the national language gradually developed to completely phase out its use, even though international business may be conducted in English. Dzradosi also considered the change over from the use of English for official purposes to the use of the national language as a gradual process since translations, especially in the legal profession was going to be a bigger challenge. In all these Dzradosi was very optimistic that such challenges could simply be overcome in the long run through understanding, co-operation, nationalism, as opposed to tribalism. “Even though the adopted language would not be the mother tongue of the peoples of Ghana, it would reflect their culture than an entirely foreign one like English.”<sup>171</sup>

Within the same period, other newspaper columnists such as Timothy Bankole also made important contributions to the debate on the adoption of an indigenous language as the official language after independence. In his article on the subject of language, Bankole asked a number of questions such as; “should the national languages of the Gold Coast be encouraged? If so, why? Is the period which is devoted to national languages in our schools

---

<sup>169</sup> F. M. K. Dzradosi. “Problems of a National Language.” *Daily Graphic*, 25 June, 1956: 5.

<sup>170</sup> Dzradosi. “Problems of a National Language,” 5.

<sup>171</sup> F. M. K. Dzradosi. “Problems of a National Language.” *Daily Graphic*, 25 June, 1956, 5.

adequate?” And finally, “will our children eventually become bad English scholars if they concentrate on national languages up to a certain standard?”<sup>172</sup> In his attempt to answer these questions, Bankole contributed richly to the discourse on national language of the Gold Coast on the eve of independence.

On the question of the choice of the official language for the Gold Coast after it had achieved complete self-governance, Bankole basically suggested that an independent Gold Coast adopted a combination of both English and other indigenous languages as national languages as was practiced in other territories outside the Gold Coast;

In every country which is emerging into self-governing democracy consideration must be given to the question of the official languages which shall be used. In Ceylon, English and two other Ceylonese languages were declared official languages...we in the Gold Coast must do same.”<sup>173</sup>

Unlike Dzradosi, Bankole was not emphatic as to the two specific indigenous languages to be chosen in addition to the English language. However, just like Dzradosi, Bankole did not advocate for the radical expulsion of English language when the two indigenous languages were adopted;

“I am not at all for one moment suggesting that English should be done away with. We shall have to conduct our foreign relations and commerce, etc. in English as we are doing now. At the same time, it is equally necessary for us to have our own national language.”<sup>174</sup>

On the question of the use of indigenous languages in Gold Coast schools, Bankole interviewed the Director of the VLB and the Production Manager of the Bureau, R. C. Whitaker and Mr. A. B. Attafua, respectively, on why a national language when adopted should be used

---

<sup>172</sup> Bankole. “Our National Languages,” 5.

<sup>173</sup> Bankole. “Our National Languages,” 5.

<sup>174</sup> Bankole. “Our National Languages,” 5.

in Gold Coast schools. In his response, A. B. Attafua stated that using a national language as a medium of instruction in schools was very useful to enhance the understanding and thinking capacity of students who find it difficult to do so in foreign languages. According to A. B. Attafua;

It is impossible for a child to understand anything thoroughly in a foreign language...to get people to think properly in the higher level, they can do it best in the language they know very well...you can retain and spread the culture of a people through their own national languages.<sup>175</sup>

This point was necessary because the director of the VLB, R. C. Whitaker had already complained that the “period allotted in the curricula of schools to national language is totally inadequate.”<sup>176</sup> Indeed, Owu-Ewie has pointed out that between 1925 to 1951, an indigenous language was used as the medium of instruction for the first three years.<sup>177</sup> However, between 1951 and 1956, it was used only for only the first year.<sup>178</sup> In all his discussions and interviews, Bankole was not certain as to the language which was to be adopted as national language. He therefore threw the question to the various literary associations and legislators to give the matter a serious thought.

Our legislators should give the lead; they should make a declaration on this matter and such declaration would enable the National Languages Bureau to formulate its policy in accordance with the declaration. Besides, we shall be then be working towards a goal regarding our national languages instead of the vagueness which now beclouds the future of our national languages.<sup>179</sup>

The final contribution to the discourse of national language adoption in the post-independence era was the views of another columnist of the *Daily Graphic*, Geormbeeyi Adali-

---

<sup>175</sup> Bankole. “Our National Languages,” 5.

<sup>176</sup> Bankole. “Our National Languages,” 5.

<sup>177</sup> Owu-Ewie, “The Language Policy of Education in Ghana,” 77.

<sup>178</sup> Owu-Ewie. “The Language Policy of Education in Ghana,” 77.

<sup>179</sup> Bankole. “Our National Languages,” 5.

Mortty. In his writings on the subject, Adali-Mortty only raised questions on the outcome if an independent Gold Coast either adopted a local national language or maintained English as the national language. Just like other contributors, Adali-Mortty did not subscribe to the immediate abolition of English language as national language because of its usefulness in linking the country to the wider world of commerce, industry and “the store-house of learning and literature.”<sup>180</sup> According to Adali-Mortty, English permitted the teaching and learning of science which would be difficult to be taught in the local language.<sup>181</sup> He retorted that “only the unrealistic will contend that English should be done away with.”<sup>182</sup>

That notwithstanding, Adali-Mortty argued for the adoption of a local national language rather than English because thinking in the English language was difficult as compared to the local language. In his view, “English is not competent to express the spirit and feelings of our culture. There can be no rendering in English of our indigenous poetry and oral literature.”<sup>183</sup> As a poet,<sup>184</sup> Adali-Mortty was concerned about how the use of English was a limitation to his art;

The wealth of proverbs and figures of speech sprang from our intimate past and our present environment. Local flora and fauna warm with the sun are so intricately woven into our local languages that no “temperate” language can adequately replace them.<sup>185</sup>

Finally, Adali-Mortty underscored the relevance of using an indigenous language as national language because of the respect such a language bestowed on the country, especially to the outside world. “It is when the Gold Coast or, for that matter, any nation can show that it

---

<sup>180</sup> Adali-Mortty. “A National Language?” 5.

<sup>181</sup> Adali-Mortty. “A National Language?” 5

<sup>182</sup> Adali-Mortty. “A National Language?” 5

<sup>183</sup> Adali-Mortty. “A National Language?” 5.

<sup>184</sup> Smith, Victoria E. ed., *Voices of Ghana: Literary Contributions to the Ghana Broadcasting System, 1955-57, Second Edition*. Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2018: 178.

<sup>185</sup> Adali-Mortty. “A National Language?” 5.

has its own distinctive culture (in dress, song, art or language) that it is entitled to and gets respect.”<sup>186</sup>

Even though Adali-Mortty, just like Timothy Bankole, was not emphatic on the specific local language to be selected, he was aware of some of the pertinent challenges of adopting a local language as a national language and gave some important comments in addressing such challenges. First, Adali-Mortty dismissed the claim that learning a “foreign” local language may prove as difficult as learning English or French or Russian. Adali-Mortty argued that such claims were inaccurate since local languages had many things in common. Learning a local language was not going to be difficult as a foreign one because “certain words, constructional patterns and backgrounds are related.”<sup>187</sup> Adali-Mortty also acknowledged the difficulty in adopting one local language at the expense of the other; “each language is, important and none of the language groups will tolerate for one moment the idea, let alone the suggestion that their language should be destroyed.”<sup>188</sup> Such a challenge in the view of Adali-Mortty was going to be overcome with time, as no local language would be destroyed when one local language was adopted as national language. Finally, the question of deciding on a particular language as national language was thrown to political leadership in the Gold Coast.

Thus, by the 1950s, public opinion on the question of language selection for an independent Gold Coast all favoured, at least, the adoption of a local language side-by-side with the English language. Most of the earlier commentators I have discussed above left the final decision of language adoption for the political class to make. So, what were the views of the political class on the question of language for an independent Gold Coast?

---

<sup>186</sup> Adali-Mortty. “A National Language?” 5.

<sup>187</sup> Adali-Mortty. “A National Language?” 5.

<sup>188</sup> Adali-Mortty. “A National Language?” 5.

In his Government Policy Statement during the Legislative Council debates on the eve of independence, 5<sup>th</sup> March, 1957, Kwame Nkrumah, Prime Minister of the Gold Coast expressed his opinion on the language question and how the government was tackling the issue.<sup>189</sup> Nkrumah stated the need for the continuous use of the English language as the official language of the Gold Coast after independence whilst emphasising the importance of indigenous languages in the Gold Coast and Africa at large. According to him;

I believe we can turn our disadvantages to our advantage... One of the obvious difficulties which faces Africa south of the Sahara is the multiplicity of languages and dialects. Every one of us in this Assembly to-day has to conduct his parliamentary business in a language which is not his own... Nevertheless, we welcome English as not only providing a common medium of exchange between ourselves, but also opening the door to us to all the heritage of the world. At the same time, however, it is essential that we do consider seriously the language in Africa. At present such is the influence of Europe in our affairs, that far more students in our University are studying Latin and Greek than are studying languages of Africa. An essential of independence is that emphasis must be laid on studying the living languages of Africa, for out of such a study will come a more simple method by which those in one part of Africa may learn the languages of those in all other parts.<sup>190</sup>

The opposition leader of the time, K. A. Busia also did not outrightly condemn the usage of English language as the official language of the Gold Coast after independence. In seconding the motion for Address-in-Reply by Prime Minister Nkrumah in the Legislative Assembly on Independence Day, Busia extolled the relevance of English to the Gold Coast whilst acknowledging the reproachable legacy that consolidated the language in the country;

We have also benefitted from British administration and law to which we owe our concepts of nationhood, democracy and individual freedom; and European education introduced to us under British rule has made us heirs of the literature and accumulated

---

<sup>189</sup> Adali-Mortty. "A National Language?" 5.

<sup>190</sup> Government Policy Statement by Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah, Tuesday, 5 March, 1957, *Gold Coast Legislative Council Debates, 1957-1958, Vol. 3-4*. Government Printer, 1958: 31.

wisdom of the ages preserved in books for succeeding generation; and the English language has not only enabled us to communicate with our fellow countrymen of different tongues and tribes but has also prepared us for effective membership in the wider community of nations to which we now come as adults and no longer as wards. Nevertheless, these benefits came to us on the basis of a relationship which could not but be an affront to us, resting as it did on assumptions we were bound, sooner or later, to seek to rectify.<sup>191</sup>

From all the comments so far, it is obvious that English language could not have been easily done away with. It was an indispensable language so that after independence in 1957, English language was maintained as the official language of the Gold Coast or Ghana. No indigenous language was adopted for use in addition to the English language as an official language, as suggested by other earlier commentators discussed above.

## CONCLUSION

Language planning between 1946 and 1957 was influenced by the decolonisation fervour of the period. There were varying debates on the choice of language to be adopted after independence. Public opinion on the subject of language did not advocate for the outright dismissal of the use of the English language as the official language. It was thought that, at least one indigenous language should be adopted in addition to English as the Gold Coast's official language. However, only English was adopted for official use in the end. This was because it was impossible to do away with English in the post-colonial era. The nature of language planning before that period had put the English language on a pedestal which made it an indispensable language.

---

<sup>191</sup> Speech in Legislative Assembly by K. A. Busia, Leader of Opposition, 6 March, 1957, *Ghana National Assembly Debates 1957-1958, Vol. 5*. Government Printer, 1958: 11.

Within the period too, the Gold Coast Broadcasting Service and the Vernacular Literature Bureau made great contributions to the development of indigenous languages in the Gold Coast, namely; Dagbani, Dangme Ewe, Ga, Kasem, Mampruli, Mfantse, Nzima and Twi. The GCBS and the VLB expanded the usage and literature of these indigenous languages. However, not all languages received the maximum attention of these two institutions. Finally, not much work was done within this period in terms of the development of orthographies; the existing orthographies were maintained for use.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

#### KEY FINDINGS

The thesis examined the history of language planning in the Gold Coast from 1874 up until 1957. By language planning, I focused on deliberate efforts aimed at developing the learning, orthographies, usage of languages in the Gold Coast. The study explains how language planning resulted in maintaining the English language as the Gold Coast's official language at independence in 1957. It also accounted for the development of few indigenous languages at the eve of independence. This was done by examining the various interventions and measures put in place by key stakeholders or language planners of the time, such as British officials, Christian missions, traditional authorities, educated elites and international cultural organizations. I drew extensively on the theory of linguistic colonialism to explain how the English language was consolidated in the Gold Coast by British officials as the language of governance and education so that it became a dominant and an indispensable language at the eve of independence even though some indigenous languages had been developed to a certain extent.

Between 1874 and 1919, language planning in the Gold Coast was spearheaded by Christian missions, the colonial government and educated elites. For the colonial government, their focus was on the development of English language but the Christian missions and educated elites focused on developing the orthographies of local languages in the Gold Coast. The focus of the Christian missions and educated elites was not on all local languages. For example, the missions developed language in areas where they had settled for evangelical purposes while the educated elites also focused on developing their respective indigenous

languages. Thus, their works created the foundation for leaving out other local languages especially in terms of the development of orthographies.

I demonstrated how the colonial state sought to promote the learning and usage of the English language in the country. During the period, British colonial administration did not pay much attention to the learning, orthographies and usage of indigenous languages which existed in the Gold Coast. For example, the 1882 Education Ordinance and Code discouraged the learning and usage of indigenous languages in Gold Coast schools. Indeed, Education Inspectors were discouraged from paying grants to schools which solely taught and used indigenous languages in their schools. However, in order for effective administration and better understanding of “African minds,” colonial officials were encouraged to learn local languages, even though some officers disagreed with this policy.

It was rather the Christian missions which helped to improve the learning, orthographies and usage of indigenous languages such as Akuapem Twi, Asante Twi, Ga and Mfantse. For the missionaries, preaching, teaching, and learning local languages was very necessary because it made their evangelising mission easier as the people easily understood missionaries who preached to them in their mother tongues. For this reason, missionaries worked on the languages which were spoken by their immediate local communities. For example, the Wesleyan missionaries, who were stationed along the coast, paid more attention to the development of the Mfantse language. The Basel mission similarly paid attention to the Akuapem Twi, Asante Twi and Ga languages because they settled in the Ga areas, the Akuapem hills and other Asante territories. A lot of Christian literature, school texts and creative writing texts were published in these local languages within the period.

Educated elites contested the promotion of the English language by the colonial government and made efforts to improve the learning, orthographies and usage of their

respective mother tongues in the country. These educated elites had benefited from mission and castle schools prior to and after 1874. Prominent amongst these educated elites were J. E. Casely Hayford, John Mensah Sarbah, E. W. Quartey-Papafio, Frederick W. K. Akuffo, D. L. Carr, J. P. Brown, J. J. Adaye and J. O. Okraku. These indigenes produced several publications in local languages. More importantly, these educated elites of the Gold Coast used newspaper publications to sensitize the people on the relevance of the use of local languages in the Gold Coast. Through this, they contested the promotion of the English language within the Gold Coast. I have cited the example of J. E. Casely Hayford, whose article in *The Weekly News* of 5 May 1908 criticized the policy of teaching only English language in government schools. Thus, by 1918, English had become the dominant language in terms of education and governance in the Gold Coast.

I also examined the changes in language planning in the Gold Coast between 1919 and 1945. Within this period, there was a change in the posture of British colonial officials in the Gold Coast concerning language planning. Attempts to standardise existing orthographies in the 1920s was a response to the differences and difficulties in earlier developed orthographies. This demonstrates the kind of renewed interest of the colonial government in local languages within this period. However, this colonial interest in local languages was connected to politics, that is, for effective administration. The focus within the period was therefore on politically significant languages, thus, languages spoken by larger groups of people. This led to a situation where there was a neglect of other languages while others were elevated.

First, the policy of learning local languages for political purposes was further expanded after 1919, when the policy of Indirect rule was given much impetus by the then governor, Frederick G. Guggisberg. It was mandatory for political officers in the Gold Coast to learn at least, one local language depending on where they were stationed in the country. What made

this policy more serious was that emoluments and promotions was tied to this policy. Political officials were required to write examinations in the local languages that they learnt such as Akuapem Twi, Asante Twi, Mfantse and Hausa. Secondly, there was a change in British official posture in the learning of local languages in schools. From 1925, local languages were used as medium of instruction in the lower primary classes and English at the upper primary classes onwards.

Within the same period, there were a number of research works carried out in the local languages. The change in language in education policy, by the colonial government in 1925 on indigenous languages, gave much encouragement to British officials, Christian missions, traditional authorities and educated elites. The government also cooperated with the International Institute of African Languages and Culture (IILAC) in the institute's efforts to promote indigenous Gold Coast languages as part of its objective. More educational and religious texts were translated from English into local languages. New orthographies were also developed for some local languages. However, it was important to note that not all languages received maximum attention. In fact, where locals developed new orthographies for their own languages, colonial officials refused to give approval and support to those works due mainly to the small number of speakers. This created a situation where only a few languages were developed in terms of orthographies, while others were left unattended to. For example, this was the case for the Ahanta and the Efutu languages whose orthographies were refused government support, and did not have standardized orthographies during the colonial era.

Within the same period too, the Phelps-Stokes Commission of 1920 recommended that the orthographies of local languages be standardized to enable easy written communication in those languages. In 1933, the Westermann script was adopted as the standardized written form for the Akan languages (Twi and Mfantse). There were criticisms and complaints from the

locals concerning this standardisation of the Akan language. In an attempt to standardise the Akan language, it appeared to the Twi and Mfantse speakers that unwarranted and unacceptable changes was being made to their respective languages by Professor Diedrich Westermann. Opposition to the Westermann Script continued well into the 1940's, especially amongst the Mfantse speakers. However, it remained adopted during the colonial period.

I also assessed language planning in the Gold Coast between 1946 and 1957, during the era of decolonisation in Africa. Colonial institutions in the 1940s and 50s such as the Gold Coast Broadcasting Corporation and the Vernacular Literature Board made great contributions to local language development and popularised the usage of certain local languages while others were neglected. Some of the languages include Akuapem Twi, Asante Twi, Dagbani, Dangme, Ewe, Ga, Kasem, Mampruli, Mfantse and Nzema. It is important to note that the selection of these languages was based on earlier works done in terms of developed orthographies.

After the Second World War up until 1957, when the independence fervour had hit the Gold Coast, much of the debate and activities in language planning was not on the development of orthographies. There were some important achievements within this period in terms of local language usage and the expansion of local literature. In the 1950s, the GCBS which was previously dominated by English began to promote the usage of local languages by broadcasting in local languages such Dagbani, Ewe, Ga, Hausa, Mfantse, Nzema and Twi.

The Vernacular Literature Bureau, which was established in 1951, also worked to expand literacy in local languages in the Gold Coast. They established newspapers and primers which were published in local languages. The bureau played an important part in the Mass Education Programme of the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development. This took the form of the production and dissemination of educational works for the general

public. With the financial and technical assistance of UNESCO, the VLB strived to achieve its aim of promoting literature in local languages within the period.

Despite the expansion of local literature and local language usage by the VLB and the GCBS and other language planners, indigenous languages were not adopted as official languages in the Gold Coast. This was a major topic of discourse in both the print media and legislative assembly as the Gold Coast was on the verge of attaining independence. From 1952 to 1957, the period of diarchy, the Gold Coast attained internal self-government under Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah. This question was left for political leaders in the Gold Coast to decide. Even though political leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah and K. A. Busia acknowledged the imposition of the English language on the peoples of the Gold Coast through colonialism, they also admitted that the language had become the dominant and an indispensable language in the country during this era. Finally, at independence in 1957, the English language was maintained as the official language of the Gold Coast, which was renamed Ghana.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

In the course of this study both primary and secondary sources pointed to interesting issues that could be further explored by scholars. One such topic is the contribution made by Islamic clerics to language planning in Africa from the precolonial to the post-colonial eras. Islam, like Christianity, has had a long history on the continent. This religion also has a strong literacy tradition. However, there seem to be an inadequate amount of publications on the contribution of Islamic clerics to language planning in Ghana and Africa at large. It will be interesting to explore the contribution both Islamic clerics and their converts made to the development of literacy in African languages as these two groups were literate in Arabic. In this study, the orthographies discussed were devised and standardized by Christian missionaries and educated elites in the Gold Coast based on the Roman alphabet. There could

be a study on the use of the Arabic alphabet to devise and standardize orthographies for indigenous Gold Coast languages by Islamic clerics and converts. This phenomenon is discussed by scholars such as Philip A. Afeadie, Alfa I. Sow and Mohammed H. Abdulaziz in their works which were reviewed for this study. However, they do not elaborate enough on it as this was not their primary focus. They referred to the Arabic alphabet as Ajami.

Another area for further studies evident in the sources for this study is the interest of the British colonial administration in the Hausa language in the Gold Coast. Even though Hausa was not an indigenous of the Gold Coast, it was one of the local languages which the British colonial government encouraged its officers to learn. The language was a subject of study at both Achimota College and at the School of Oriental Studies, where British officials received education in Gold Coast languages. Today the language is also a lingua franca for many Ghanaians but not the extent of the English language. It will be interesting to explore the impact of promoting Hausa learning on the status of the language as a lingua franca both during and after the colonial era.

Finally, this study has discussed the significant roles played by institutions such as the Vernacular Literature Bureau, the Gold Coast Broadcasting Service, the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures and the United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the promotion of the learning, orthographies and usage of indigenous languages in the Gold Coast during the colonial era. Firstly, it will be interesting to examine the work of these institutions on indigenous languages during the post-colonial era. Secondly, the contributions of other institutions including the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT), the Bible Society of Ghana, Global Recordings Network, the Ghana Book Publishers' Association, the Ghana Book Development Council, and the many

media houses who use indigenous languages for broadcasting, to the promotion of the learning, orthographies and usage of indigenous Ghanaian languages could also be explored by scholars.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### PRIMARY SOURCES

### ARCHIVAL SOURCES

GH/PRAAD/ADM4/1/239, 1950, “Annual Volume the Laws of the Gold Coast Containing all Legislation Enacted During the Year.”

GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/816, 1918-1948, “Education Board Meetings (Case No. 9).”

GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/867, 1924, “Languages Spoken in Eastern Province (Case No. 12).”

GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/900, 1924-1929, “Native Languages, Knowledge of in Political Service (Case No. 50).”

GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1007, 1928-1933, “International Institute of African Languages and Cultures (Case No. 26).”

GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1009, 1928, “Vernacular Gramophone Records – Censorship of (Case No. 28).”

GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1029, 1929-1933, “Brissa Language.”

GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1077, 1931, “Census - 1931 (Case No. 8).”

GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1272, 1922-1954, “Native Languages and Literature (Revd. G. R. Acquah) (Case No. 40).”

GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1381, 1931 N.T.N.A., “Constitution of Dagomba State (Case No. N.T.N.A.).”

GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1422, 16/3/1920-1/8/1939, “J. C. De Graft Johnson Assistant Secretary... Native Affairs (Case No. 18).”

GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1456, 1921-1924, “Standardization of Fante and Akan Languages (Case No. 7).”

GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1456, 1925-1931, “Common Script for Gold Coast Vernaculars (Case No. 10).”

GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1456, 1926-1929, “Standardization of Akan and Fante Languages (Case No. 15).”

GH/PRAAD/ADM11/1/1608, 1927, “Translation Papers – Hausa into English and English to Hausa.”

GH/PRAAD/CSO7/1/2, 1935-1937, “Gold Coast Annual General Report, 1935-36.”

GH/PRAAD/CSO18/1/83, 1931-1940, “New Script for Languages Spoken on the Gold Coast.”

GH/PRAAD/RG3/5/15, 1942-1949, “Twi Manuscripts.”

GH/PRAAD/RG3/5/33, 1942-1944, “Fante Vocabulary List and Rules of Spelling by the Methodist Church, (1942-1944).”

GH/PRAAD/RG3/5/59, 1936, “Awutu Language (Efutu) (Case No. 3119).”

GH/PRAAD/RG3/5/209, 1936-1942, “Publication in Ahanta Language.”

GH/PRAAD/RG17/1/22, 1955-1961, “UNO, UNESCO, ILO, etc. (6/8/55-20/2/61).”

Metcalf, G. E. *Great Britain and Ghana: Documents of Ghana History, 1807-1957*, Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1964.

“Bibliography of Works in Ghana Languages” compiled by the Bureau of Ghana Languages (BGL) in 1967, Personal Files of Dr Victoria E. Smith.

*Gold Coast Legislative Council Debates, 1925-26*. Government Printer, 1926.

*Gold Coast Legislative Council Debates, 1957-1958, Vol. 3-4*. Government Printer, 1958.

*Ghana National Assembly Debates 1957-1958, Vol. 5*. Government Printer, 1958.

## **INTERVIEWS**

Moses J. Appleh, Head of Ga Section of the BGL, 02-05-2019, BGL Office, Accra.

Joseph K. Avunyra, Head of Ewe Section of the BGL, 19-08-2019, BGL Office, Accra.

Enoch A. Adibuer, Head of Dangme Section of the BGL, 03-09-2019, BGL Office, Accra.

Evans Gyenny-Mensah, Head of Nzema Section of the BGL, 03-09-2019, BGL Office, Accra.

Peter Essien, Deputy Director and Former Director of the BGL, 13-09-2019, BGL Office, Accra.

### NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

“Literature Bureau Reviews Its First Year’s Work.” *Gold Coast Weekly Review*, Vol. III, No. 6, Wednesday, 11 February, 1953, 4.

“UNESCO Expert Has Arrived.” *Gold Coast Weekly Review*, Vol. III, No. 25, Wednesday, 24 June 1953, 4.

“Broadcasting: Plans Are Accepted for Improvement.” *Gold Coast Weekly Review*, Vol. III, No. 30, Wednesday, 29 July 1953, 2.

“Vernacular Literature Bureau Plans to Expand Production.” *Gold Coast Weekly Review*, Vol. III, No. 48, Wednesday, 2 December, 1953, 1.

“New Broadcasting Equipment Will Greatly Improve Transmission.” *Gold Coast Weekly Review*, Vol. VI, No. 28, Wednesday, 11 June, 1956, 4.

“United Kingdom Parliament to Introduce an Act of Independence to Declare Gold Coast a Sovereign and Independent State within the Commonwealth.” *Gold Coast Weekly Review*, Vol. VI, No. 32, Wednesday, 8 August, 1956, 3.

“Legislative Assembly Adopts Motion for Independence.” *Gold Coast Weekly Review*, Vol. VI, No. 33, Wednesday, 15 August, 1956, 1.

“New Broadcasting House Foundation Stone Laid.” *Gold Coast Weekly Review*, Vol. VI, No. 33, Wednesday, 15 August, 1956, 1.

“A Literary Work to Further Christian Evangelism.” *Gold Coast Weekly Review*, Vol. VI, No. 35, Wednesday, 29 August, 1956, 6.

Bankole, Timothy. “Our National Language.” *Daily Graphic*, 18 January, 1954, 5.

Adali-Mortty, G. “A National Language?” *Daily Graphic*, 25 January, 1954, 5.

Dzradosi, F. M. K. “Problems of a National Language.” *Daily Graphic*, 25 June, 1956, 5.

## SECONDARY SOURCES

- Abarry, Nana. "Teaching Akan Oral Literature in Ghanaian Schools." *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 3, Special Issue: Social, Economic, Political and Cultural Dimensions of Life in Ghana, (1994): 308-328.
- Addo-Fening, Robert. "Ghana Under Colonial Rule: An Outline of the Early Period and the Interwar Years." *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana, New Series, No. 15, Articles from the Historical Society of Ghana's Seminars and Conferences 2007-2012*, (2013): 39-70.
- Adomah-Gyekye, Bright. "The Relationship between Christian Missionaries, British Companies' Administrators and the Peoples of the Gold Coast, 1807-1902." BA in History Dissertation, Department of History, University of Ghana, 2017.
- Afeadie, Philip A. *Brokering Colonial Rule: Political Agents in Northern Nigeria, 1886 – 1914*. Verlag Press, 2008.
- Afeadie, Philip A. "Language of Power: Pidgin in the Colonial Governance of Northern Nigeria." *Legon Journal of Humanities*, Vol. 26, No. 1, (2015): 19-37.
- Agbedor, Paul K. "Language Planning for National Development: The Case of Ghana." PhD in Linguistics Dissertation, Department of Linguistics, University of Victoria, 1994.
- Agbodeka, Francis. *A History of the University of Ghana: Half a Century of Higher Education (1948-1998)*. Woeli Publishing Service, 1998.
- Ansah, Gladys N. "Re-examining the Fluctuations in Language-in-Education Policies in Post-Independence Ghana." *Multilingual Education Vol. 4, No. 12*, (2014): 1-15.
- Ansah, Gladys N. "Harnessing Our Multilingual Heritage for National Development." Lecture at Inter-College Lecture Series at the ISSER Conference Facility, University of Ghana, 2 May, 2019.

- Anyidoho, Akosua and M. E. Kropp Dakubu. "Ghana: Indigenous Languages, English and an Emerging National Identity." *Language and National Identity in Africa*, (2008): 141-157.
- Asante, Rogers Krobea. "Introducing Nkami: A Forgotten Guang Language and People of Ghana." *Legon Journal of Humanities*, Vol. 28, No. 2, (2017): 73-104.
- Bemile, Sebastian K. "Promotion of Ghanaian Languages and Its Impact on National Unity: The Dagara Language Case." *Ethnicity in Ghana: The Limits of Invention*, (2000): 204-225.
- Boahen, A. Adu. "New Trends and Processes in Africa in the Nineteenth Century." *General History of Africa Vol. VI: Africa in the Nineteenth Century until the 1880s*, (1989): 40-60.
- Boahen, A. Adu. "Politics in Ghana, 1800-1874." *History of West Africa II*, (1974): 167-261.
- Cooper, R. L. *Language Planning and Social Change*. Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Creswell, John W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Sage Publications, 2014.
- Dako, Kari and Millicent Akosua Quarcoo. "Attitudes towards English in Ghana." *Legon Journal of Humanities*, Vol. 28, No. 1, (2018): 20-30.
- Dakubu, Mary E. Kropp. ed. *The Languages of Ghana*. KPI Limited, 1988.
- Errington, Joseph. "Colonial Linguistics." *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 30, (2001): 19-39.
- Freeman, Thomas Birch. *Journal of Various Visits to the Kingdoms of Ashanti, Aku, and Dahomi in Western Africa, Third Edition*. Frank Cass and Co., 1968.
- Fynn, J. K. "Ghana-Asante (Ashanti)." *West African Resistance: The Military Response to Colonial Occupation*, (1971): 19-52.
- Graham, C. K. *The History of Education in Ghana*. Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1976.

- Hagan, George P. *Divided We Stand: A Study of Social Change among the Effutu of Coastal Ghana*. No. 29. Department of History, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2000.
- Kimble, David. *A Political History of Ghana: The Rise of Gold Coast Nationalism, 1850-1928*. Oxford University Press, 1963.
- Laitin, David D. "The Tower of Babel as a Coordination Game: Political Linguistics in Ghana." *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 88, No. 3, (1994): 622-634.
- Lawrence, Benjamin Nicholas. "Most Obedient Servant: The Politics of Language in German Colonial Togo." *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, Vol. 40, Cahier 159, (2000): 489-524.
- Lewis, J. L. "Education in a New Nation: Ghana." *The Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 41, No. 4, (1960): 155-158.
- Lugard, Frederick. *Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*. Blackwood and Sons, 1922.
- Mputubwele, Makim M. "The Zairian Language Policy and Its Effects on the Literatures in National Languages." *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 2, (2003): 272-292.
- Nkrumah, Gertrude. "A History of Language Policy in Ghana, 1920-1971." MPhil in History Dissertation, Department of History, University of Ghana, 2011.
- Nkrumah, Gertrude with Amoah-Boampong, Cyrelene. "Rethinking British Colonial Policy in the Gold Coast: The Language Factor." *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana, New Series, No. 15, Articles from the Historical Society of Ghana's Seminars and Conferences 2007-2012*, (2013): 137-157.
- Ntewusu, Samuel A. "Serendipity: Conducting Research on Social History in Ghana's Archives." *History in Africa* Vol. 41, (2014): 417-423.
- Ntewusu, Samuel A. "The Banana and Peanut Archive of Ghana." *History in Africa* Vol. 44, No. 1, (2017): 285-294.

- Obeng, Samuel Gyasi. "An Analysis of the Linguistic Situation in Ghana." *African Languages and Cultures*, Vol. 10, No. 1, (1997): 63-81.
- Odamtten, S. K. *The Missionary Factor in Ghana's Development up to the 1880s*. Waterville Publishing House, 1978.
- Opoku, K. Asare. "Religion in Africa during the Colonial Era." *General History of Africa Vol. VII: Africa under Colonial Domination 1880-1935*, (1985): 508-538.
- Owu-Ewie, Charles and Emma Sarah Eshun. "The Use of English as Medium of Instruction at the Upper Basic Level (Primary Four to Junior High School) in Ghana: From Theory to Practice." *Journal of Education and Practice*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (2015): 72-82.
- Owu-Ewie, Charles. "Language, Education and Linguistic Human Rights in Ghana." *Legon Journal of Humanities*, Vol. 28, No. 2, (2017): 151-172.
- Owu-Ewie, Charles. "The Language Policy of Education in Ghana: A Critical Look at the English-Only Language Policy of Education." *Selected Proceedings of the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on African Linguistics*, (2006): 76-85.
- Rampolla, Mary Lynn. *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2015.
- Rosekrans, Kristin et al. "Education Reform for the Education of Mother-Tongue Education in Ghana." *International Review of Education Vol. 58, No. 5, October*, (2012): 593-618.
- Shillington, Kevin. *History of Africa*. Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2005.
- Smith, Victoria E. ed. *Voices of Ghana: Literary Contributions to the Ghana Broadcasting System, 1955-57, Second Edition*. James Currey, 2018.
- Sow, Alfa I. and Mohamed H. Abdulaziz. "Language and Social Change." *General History of Africa Vol. VIII: Africa since 1935*, (1993): 522-552.
- Suret-Canale, Jean and A. Adu Boahen. "West Africa, 1945-60." *General History of Africa Vol. VIII: Africa since 1935*, (1993): 191.

*The Bureau of Ghana Languages at a Glance.* Bureau of Ghana Languages, 1996.

“The Bureau of Ghana Languages-BGL.” Retrieved from ([www.ghanaculture.gov.gh](http://www.ghanaculture.gov.gh)-29/05/2006) on 29/09/2018 at 17:56.