Identity and Representation through Language in Ghana: The Postcolonial Self and the Other

Dora F. Edu-Buandoh[1a]

Abstract

Research related to colonialism and post colonialism shows how the identities of indigenous people were constructed and how these identities are reconstructed in our contemporary world. The thrust of this paper is that colonialism brought a shift in the linguistic structure of Ghana with the introduction of the use of English among Ghanaians. The coexistence of both Ghanaian languages and English after colonialism has introduced a hybrid linguistic situation that is engineered by the presence or absence of literacy among the people of Ghana. The paper asserts that language and formal literacy, which have been closely linked to the English language, have informed the construction and reconstruction of identities of elitism and subjectivities and subsequently led to the representation of such identities in different pragmatic contexts. The paper advocates a reconsideration of language policies in mainly post-colonial contexts to bring indigenous language to coexist equally with former colonial languages in education and other related contexts.

[1] Associate Professor, Email: dora.edubuandoh@ucc.edu.gh
   Tel: +233-244-659201
[a] University of Cape Coast, Ghana

1. Introduction

Modern colonialism is simply described as the "conquest and control of other people's land and goods" (Loomba, 2015, p. 20). Colonialism, which involved mostly European empires, did not only involve colonizers settling in the colonized countries in order to gain access to economic resources, but also made the indigenous people a colony of mentally subjugated people that reconstructed the settlers' identity as *superior*. Colonialists (e.g., the French) also transported the colonized people into their contexts and extended their political structures, education, culture, and their way of living to the colonized people. This paper traces the path of modern colonialism as it affects Africa and focuses on the language situation in postcolonial Ghana. It also advocates a reconsideration of language policies in mainly post-colonial contexts to bring indigenous language to coexist equally with former colonial languages in education and other related contexts

In discussing colonialism, one related concept that keeps arising is imperialism. Colonialism and imperialism are sometimes used as interchangeable concepts, but some researchers draw a distinction between the two. One of such distinctions between the two concepts is drawn by Smith (1999). She identifies colonialism as a tool for imperialism but imperialism as a form of economic expansion, subjugation of others, and as a discursive field of knowledge. Both concepts refer to empires taking over other people and controlling them; however, whereas colonialism involves the colonizers moving to settle in the colonized land, imperialist empires extend their powers into the colonized countries without going to settle there, but rather to control the affairs of the colonized country from the empire. Imperialism is mostly ideological and it thrives by controlling other cultures, language, political structures and economy from outside the colony. Colonialism, on the other hand, comes with cultural changes and movement of professionals to the geographic colony in order to control the colony. There is a thin line between these two concepts and blurry as this line seems, it is considered that colonialism is a form of imperialism (Loomba, 1998; Said, 1993). There is a third concept that naturally comes out of colonialism and imperialism and that is post-colonialism.

There is a commonplace debate on whether colonialism has been really abolished or it has come back in different shapes. It is a common belief in the literature that the European empires have expired and almost all colonies are now free and independent to rule themselves, therefore the era is a post-colonial era (Willinsky, 1998). This may seem to be true on the surface and to the ordinary person, but researchers mark the end of World War II as the end point of colonialism and the beginning of the period of transnational capitalism; a period when a different form of imperialism started and transnational capitalism sprung up as a different kind of colonization (Willinsky, 1998). Negri and Hardt (2000) refer to this state as the period of the Empire where the capitalist states or the new order of globalization functions just like the old empires.

Mfum-Mensah (2005) mentions that scholars view colonialism in three stages, namely: classical, internal, and neo colonialism. He explains the stage of classical colonialism as the type where the indigenous people are subjugated by an external power. Internal colonialism refers to the domination of a society geographically and in linguistic and cultural terms. Mfum-Mensah (2005) mentions that the third stage, which is neocolonialism, involves industrialised countries dominating Third World countries in many ways. Post-colonialism can be described as the normalizing of colonialist structures by maintaining the exploitations and alienating the indigenous *other* as inferior through culture, education, economic, and political structures designed by state apparatuses of the former colonizing states. It is a way of keeping the unequal relationship between the former colonizers and the former colonies in place so as to maintain control over the former colonies (Loomba, 2015; Smith, 1989; Willinsky, 1998). Post-colonialism can therefore be classified as an ideological formation rather than an era.

2. Colonization in Africa

Colonization in Africa started early when Northern Africa was conquered and became a colony of European and later Asia Minor

empires. These colonization conquests, perhaps, did not gain much attention in the history of colonies like the European colonization of the whole of Africa. Colonial powers believed that holding on to colonies enhanced the power and prestige of the empires, and brought wealth and political power to them. In effect, it was commercial greed, territorial ambition, and political rivalry that motivated the Europeans to take over Africa (Pakenham, 1991). The struggle of European empires to gain control over the land and people of Africa came to its peak when the empires shared the continent among themselves, thereby demarcating countries to suit their interests and economic gains and leading to what became known in historical research as The Scramble for Africa; an event that happened at the Berlin West African Conference in 1884. At that conference, France, Britain, Germany, and Portugal shared colonies without reference to Africans and drew the borders of African countries. That act was a landmark in the objectification of the continent because it was shared like a commodity, an object, without a thought about the people who inhabit this continent. The geographical map of the continent was changed and what came out is the modern map of Africa. As a result of this arbitrary demarcation of land and people, many tribes and ethnic groups who used to occupy particular geographical regions had their lands demarcated to split the groups (Khapoya, 1997; Oliver, 1992; Pakenham, 1991). An example is present day Ghana which shares some of its ethnic Ewe group with Togo on its eastern border, although originally all members of the Ewe group lived as one ethnic group in one geographical location. The scramble for Africa also left many African countries with languages (e.g., English in Ghana and Nigeria; French in Togo, Benin, and Cote D'Ivoire) and cultures that were brought into the colonies by the colonial masters and these continue to affect the continent in many ways; even after the independence of these former colonies.

3. Ghana—The Gold Coast Colony of the British

The Gold Coast, now Ghana, is one of the countries that were colonized by Britain. In 1874,

the British formally established the British Crown Colony of the Gold Coast (now Ghana) 'legalizing' a colonial policy which had in fact been in force since the signing of the bond between the coastal chiefs and the British in 1844, despite the fact that the chiefs never ceded sovereignty to the British under the bond, though some of them allowed British intervention in judicial matters". (www.ghanamission.ch/mission9.html)

The wars between the Fantes from the coast and the Ashantis was significant in the colonization process. In 1901, the Ashantis became part of the colony after they were defeated in a war with the Fantes, supported by the British. In 1902, the Northern Territory also became a British colony thereby bringing the whole of Gold Coast under British rule. The processes for colonizing these sections and bringing them together under one umbrella called Gold Coast was not without resistance. The rebellion, mainly from the Ashantis, was due to their quest to keep their culture and traditions from adulteration and also to maintain their territorial powers over their geographical location (Chamberlain, 2013; Muller, 2012).

The colonization of Gold Coast affected many parts of the culture and life of the people. Through colonization, the modern European model of organization of people into nations was introduced into Gold Coast, and the indigenous nature of statehood was taken away (Crowder & Ade, 1972; Osabu-Kle, 2000; Pakenham, 1991). Pre-colonial Gold Coast had traditional chieftaincy rule as its governance structure. Traditional chiefs figured prominently in the indirect rule that the British used to govern the Gold Coast. Though the traditional chiefs were used to rule the colony, they were still not regarded as equal in status to the colonizers (Osabu-Kle, 2000). Chieftaincy was and continues to be a deeply honored cultural heritage and institution; it speaks to the core of ethnic philosophies and provides space for the exercise of traditional authority, leadership and management of resources. By using the traditional rulers who embody the cultures of the people to rule the people, the British took away the institutionalized collective authority put in the

custody of these traditional rulers, and made them an extension of the colonial rulers.

Colonization affected the education structure in Gold Coast. Pre-colonial education was informal and thrived on apprenticeship to master craftsmen and artisans. The earliest forms of formal education in Gold Coast is traced to the coming of the Europeans in the 1850s. Colonial education in Ghana was aimed at educating an elitist group that would cater to the whims of the ruling group. Ideologically, they were groomed to be like the colonizers and perpetuate the power of the 'civilized' European concept of human organization. Central to this form of education was the English language. English was taught in Ghanaian schools during the period of colonialism and even after independence, it remains the single most important language in and for education. As Willinsky (1998) observes, when the British Empire was expanding itself around the world, it made English a tool for dominating and silencing the colonized by using it to regulate who gains access to authority and knowledge. The educational institutions set up by the European merchants and later the colonial rulers and the missionaries ensured that English was *the* language for education thereby making indigenous languages unimportant (Bamgbose, 2000). There are many indigenous languages in Ghana. The highest number cited in the literature is eighty-one (www.ethnologue.com). However, only thirteen are used in education with the rest used as home languages. It was considered that these languages were inadequate for education. Though efforts were made to incorporate indigenous languages into formal education during the colonial period, these efforts did not gain much support. Owu-Ewie (2006) mentions that by 1925, Ghanaian language had become part of formal education, but the status changed after independence in 1957.

Brock-Utne (2000), perhaps rightly, asserts that when African countries gained independence from the colonizing countries, they still chose to maintain the languages of the former colonies because they believed that the multiplicity of languages in the African countries made it difficult to choose one as a national language. It can be argued that in addition to Brock-Utne's (2000) assertion, the situation in Ghana did not promote the study of Ghanaian languages in formal education, because the people still lived in the psychological era of a context where English dominated all formal activities. The educated were more interested in English than in the Ghanaian languages. They recognized the identity of the colonizer as an attractive one because it gave them social goods such as respect and authority. Engaging in self-changing activities and mentality, the educated Ghanaians bought into an identity that the colonizers had constructed as *the* identity of a civilized person; an identity that came with some power and wealth which was the preserve of the *Self*. This situation has been described in the literature as 'internal colonialism' (Frank, 1970; Mfum-Mensah, 2005). Internal, because although the colonizers had physically left, the people were still colonized in mind and perpetuated the same activities that the colonizers exhibited.

4. Linguistic Imperialism

Language is a very powerful tool for the control of people and countries. According to Phillipson (1992), linguistic imperialism is about the transfer of a dominant language to others not only as a way of demonstrating power, but also to gain economic power and to transfer aspects of the dominant culture. Anchimbe (2007) contends that,

> What seems to have been ignored or, as the case may be, under-studied is the ex-colonial citizens' choice of language and identity. The choice of language was rendered complex by the fact that colonialism introduced foreign languages that differed from indigenous languages in several significant ways: written vs. oral, taught in school vs. learnt at home, sources of education-related employment vs. ethnic interactional languages. (p. 10)

Linguistic imperialism has been present in many colonized spaces. It is no different from colonized Africa. There are countries in Africa, former colonies of colonizing empires that continue to use and regard languages of their former colonial masters as the languages of civilization. In fact, Anglophone, Francophone, and Lusophone African

countries continue to see these languages as the languages of education, civilization, power, and access to social goods. The prestige that was accorded the coloniser's language still continues to be felt many years after colonization.

Anchimbe (2007) maintains that though these languages have contributed to multilingualism in former colonies, the effects are not felt by only the former colonies, but also by the colonizers. The author asserts that the mixture of languages with the dominant colonizing languages also changed the colonizers' use and ownership of their own languages thereby allowing the languages to spread beyond their original boundaries and imbibing different sociocultural overtones, including the identities of both the colonized and the colonizers. The research on ownership of some of these colonial languages, especially English, has indicated that the languages can no longer be considered the languages of the colonizers alone because the development of these languages, after colonization, had been heavily engendered by the non-native speaker (Kachru, 1992; Widdowson, 1994). Phillipson (1992) still sees a dominance relationship, especially where English is concerned because he maintains that linguistic imperialism related to English is the power asserted and maintained by establishment as well as the cultural and linguistic inequalities that exist between English and other languages that come into contact. To him, English has, over the years, spread to many places and established itself as the language of development, technology, elitism, and education. Its philosophy of controlling other languages is to make the people believe that English has intrinsic, extrinsic, and functional values, compared to other languages.

Philipson (1992) further explains that, when the establishment argues that English has intrinsic values, it lists the language as rich and noble and more prestigious than other languages. The extrinsic arguments hold that English is a global language that has been well developed and has a wealth of curriculum and materials to promote its learning. The establishment, also points to the usefulness of English, dwelling on how English is used in aviation, commerce, education, politics, and other international fields, and refers to English

as the gateway to the world. These arguments in favor of English, according to Phillipson (1992), are geared towards linguistic imperialism and do not support the development of other languages, usually, indigenous languages in the former colonies. In reviewing Borjian's work on linguistic imperialism, Philipson (2013) questions the role of the British Council, Universities in the United Kingdom and United the United States as well as Western agencies such as USAID in perpetuating the promoting, learning and positioning of English in the world. He further argues that most textbooks used to teach English have very little or no cultural relevance to the non-English cultural countries.

It is important to note that, although other researchers support Phillipson's (1992) theory of imperialism, there are others who believe Phillipson's (1992) arguments are far-fetched. Widdowson (1998) contends that, there is a contradiction in the thought that any language by itself can exert hegemonic control. Widdowson's (1998) argument is supported by others who maintain that people of the former colonies are capable of taking their own decisions on their choice of language and English should not be seen as the hegemonic force that controls them even after colonisation. Reference can be made to Brock-Utne's (2000) assertion that the colonies themselves choose to use English after colonization. These counter assertions are interesting, considering that most of these indigenous languages spoken in the former colonies continue to be confined to only the former colonies, thereby relinquishing their functions and external status to English and other colonial languages. The indigenous languages do not travel beyond the continent and thus become important only in the cultures in which they are spoken. The situation of Ghana makes an interesting reference and the next section will examine the literature to project the linguistic identities that are constructed and represented in the use of English in Ghana.

An issue related to the recognition of English language as a prestigious global language is the reference to literacy as synonymous with English. When literacy is defined, it is done with formal education in mind, and also in

relation to the ability to read and write. Most often than not, the reference to reading and writing is synonymous with reading and writing English. The ability to read and write indigenous languages are not recognized as marks of literacy. Macias (1994) argues that most literacy assessment tools are geared towards surveying literacy in English and not in other languages; they rather stigmatise those who are literate in their own indigenous languages and languages other than English. Considering that Ghanaians consider English as a core part of literacy, it is instructive to place this perception in line with how Ghanaians construct their linguistic identities in relation to the identities of others.

5. Representing and Constructing *Self* and *Other* in the Use of English in Ghana

Hall (1997) defines representation as the use of language, signs, and images to represent the world meaningfully to other people. He adds that representation is an essential part of the processes through which meaning is constructed and shared thereby providing a way of connecting culture to meaning. Hall (1997) identifies three main forms of representation: reflective, intentional, and constructivist/ constructionist. Reflective approach sees the representation of the meaning of the world in the meanings of objects, people, ideas, or events in terms of how language reflects these. In effect, the meaning of the object is how language represents that object. Intentional representation, according to Hall (1997), occurs where the meaning of the world is determined by the speaker's intentions. It is the speaker or author who imposes meaning on the world through his or her own intentions of his/her use of language. The third approach, constructivist representation, dwells on the basis that meaning of the world is socially constructed through social use of language, symbols, and signs. Though all three approaches point to the links between language, representation, and the meaning of the world, this paper dwells on the intentional and constructivist approaches to explain how individuals are constructed through the material world of the use of language.

Representation is a concept closely related to identity construction. Individuals construct their identities and are constructed to represent their social, ethnic, and racial groups. People develop their understanding of who they think they are in close relationship to the society or any group they belong to. If the group is represented positively, members see themselves positively as made by the group. On the other hand, if the group is represented negatively, members keep low esteem of themselves (Abrams & Hogg, 1990). Representation, therefore, relates to how individuals, societies, and cultures are presented and portrayed on such platforms as the media, politics, and other social contexts.

Representations of Ghanaians who do not speak English are, in a way, different from those of Ghanaians who speak English. By use of constructivist representation, English has become a measure for literacy and upward social mobility, thereby making it easy for some portion of the populace to be represented as 'illiterate' or 'local' while others are seen 'literate'. The use of the term 'local' in the Ghanaian context constructs an identity of one who is not educated, unrefined, from the rural countryside and with very little or no civilization. That person cannot speak English because he or she has not been to school. As such, that individual can also not work in clerical or related jobs. The educated elite would not like to be constructed anywhere near this description. As they intentionally construct their identity of the educated, intellectual, and refined, because they are users of English, they construct the 'local' identity for those who do not use English.

In post-colonial Ghana, the ability to read and write in English has become paramount to access to well-paid and prestigious public positions (Edu-Buandoh, 2007, 2008; Owusu-Ansah & Torto, 2013; Owu-Ewie, 2006). In addition, the concept of being literate in English comes with additional privileges and comforts that the seemingly 'illiterates' do not enjoy. Ghanaians who have had formal education and thus can read and write in English mostly see themselves as belonging to a positive social group with positive social identity and are entitled to positive social representation. They are in charge of governance and all other key sectors of the

economy. Although the 1992 Constitution of Ghana does not specify English as the only language of parliament, and actually specifies some Ghanaian languages that could be allowed, parliamentarians do not use Ghanaian languages. In a column published in the 8th of March, 2014 edition of the *GraphicOnline*, Prof. Kwesi Yankah, a linguistics researcher, intimated that "communication in Parliament since independence has been in the ex-colonial language. The nation diminishes the pool of qualified legislators, as well as stakeholder participation in governance, restricting these to a tiny minority conversant with the English Language" (http://www.graphic.com.gh/news). In effect, English has unofficially been a major criterion for selection of participants to be in parliament when *others*, who are not literate in English but could have been major stakeholders are left out because they cannot read and write English.

The educated Ghanaian constructs himself or herself as the knowledgeable, the elite and the powerful; this is parallel to how the colonialist presented *self*. Such construction of self is made possible by the socio-cultural setup of the society that uses school literacy and ability to read and write English to measure one's social status. The situation may also have been fueled by globalization and technologisation: two strands that push every other person and society to believe that the West is the first world and the point of reference for every other society. To fit into the global society, the former colonies strive to speak and act like their former colonizers. In reality, their economic system, educational structures, and political policies are directed indirectly from outside; usually their former colonizers. Colonialism has given way to an era of postcolonialism and the ideology of controlling nations has not been erased. Representation in the present era is still drawn on the *Self* and the *Other*, where the representation of *Self* is positive against the negative representation of the *Other*. It is important to note that such representations are deeply embedded in linguistic resources so that people are made to accept that some languages mark education and development whereas others do not have those values.

The issue of language in the former colonies, such as Ghana, is plagued by linguistic imperialism. As Stromquist (2002) argues, globalization promises individuals, organizations, and countries education, technological development, knowledge, material production, and life success. However, there is another side to globalization that enforces unequal concentration of economic power in the hands of few institutions and countries thereby increasing poverty and grand exclusion of others in an aggressive global market. That side promotes the recognition of some languages and rejection of others. When some languages are considered to be languages of education, then those who gain these forms of education stand to gain from the society, especially when these forms of education are considered the 'knowledge of society' and other ways of knowing are not given much value.

Textbooks and curricula used for education in Ghana are ideologically controlled by powerful businesses that mark the representation of the *Other* societies and nations. As Opoku-Amankwa, Edu-Buandoh, and Brew-Hammond (2014) observe, when a nation's language policy emphasizes a foreign language, as the case is with Ghana, the likely effects would include negating the status of indigenous languages. The authors contend that such policies will make publication and distribution of learning materials tilt towards those that are published in the foreign language. For Ghana, because the policy favors English, most textbooks are written and published in English rather than the indigenous Ghanaian languages, because there is a higher economic motivation for publishers to publish textbooks and other learning materials in English. The focus on English fuels the national language policy as well as rules and regulations in most basic and high schools. As Edu-Buandoh and Otchere (2012) observe, there are many basic schools in Ghana, where pupils are punished for speaking Ghanaian language on the school compound. Then, there are those schools that have inscribed boldly on the walls 'Speak English'. In effect, the Ghanaian education sector is just perpetuating the English language as the preferred language for education. The debate about decolonizing colonial languages continues even after the wa Thiong'o led crusade in 1986 when he argued that there is the need for African writers to decolonize their

minds and write in African languages. The author was coming from a strong perspective that language is synonymous with the culture and identity of the people and so cannot be given away so freely. He argued that "language as culture is the collective memory bank of a people's experience in history" (wa Thiong'o, 1986, p. 15). In effect, when people and nations are quick to give away their languages in order to engage in the languages of others, they lose their culture and their history. Ghanaians may be losing the cultures of all the indigenous languages overrun by English Though one may question why the blame is put on linguistic imperialism when Ghanaian governments could have enforced the teaching of at least thirty-four Ghanaian languages, it is instructive to note that the mentality left by colonialism has not been wiped away. Rather, it has metamorphosed into globalization which still places English at the top of the ladder at the expense of indigenous languages. As such, primary discoursal functions are given to English while Ghanaians use indigenous languages for less important discourse functions.

By giving peripheral and domestic functions to indigenous languages, countries reduce the capital of their own languages. Ghana needs to identify national functions for its indigenous languages and make these languages attractive to the world. If Ghanaians do not recognize their indigenous languages and prefer to develop only English, then perhaps, they may have no moral justification to beat the dead horse of colonialism. Although some researchers such as Gikandi (2000) see wa Thiong'o's (1986) recommendation of total boycott of colonial languages as extreme, it is still important for former colonies to identify how indigenous languages could be developed to function in a context of co-existence with the colonial languages.

There is no gainsaying that some researchers blame the less powerful nations for their inability to gain equity in the global field despite postcolonialism. In a speech delivered on Emancipation Day celebration in Ghana in 2003, a renowned historian, lecturer, and reputable traditional chief, Dr. Maison (Nana Kobina Nketsia) lamented on how "Western cultures, ideologies, philosophies, and paradigms continue to guide every facet of life

of Africans". He maintained that, "African countries essentially have imported state apparatus, religion, education, hardware, politics and even economics". He continued that unless Africans "courageously and consciously step away from neo-colonialist tendencies", celebrations of Ghanaian culture and achievement will be meaningless (www.ghanaweb.com).

Osabu-Kle (2000) also contends that African politicians are not able to rid themselves of colonial mentality thus contributing to the perpetuation of postcolonialism. Tracing the political development of Ghana from Nkrumah's rule in 1957 through the military regimes, to the democratic time of Rawlings in the 1990s, Osabu-Kle (2000) explains that "political conditions for successful economic development cannot be achieved through the full transplantation of alien ideologies and political culture" (p. 137). But, can third world countries divest themselves of western construction of their identities and promote the representation of their own identities through their own means? Can such countries disinvest themselves of so-called colonial languages and use indigenous languages for all functions? Would the educated of postcolonial nations construct themselves differently? These and many more questions plague the representation ofS*self* in societies that have been left the legacy of postcolonial languages and are unable to wring selves from these languages.

Decolonization may have given people of the former colonies the freedom to govern themselves; having gained independence from their colonial masters. However, decolonization does not and has not led to a total end to colonialism. The concept of postcolonialism may therefore be deceptive because there are still traces of colonialist structures in the form of globalization, world trade, representation, and ideological formations. As Loomba (1998) argues "the prefix 'post' complicates matters because it implies an 'aftermath' in two senses – temporal, as in coming after, and ideological, as in supplanting" (p. 7). The objectification and exploitation of the *Other* still continues but in different shapes. It is no longer about specific geographical locations but also among minority groups in western countries. There is the need for the *Self* as well as the *Other* to act

in its own way to liberate itself from colonialist mentality. Nkrumah (1969) cautions that if colonialist policies persist, social conflicts will arise out of the capitalist policies and the developed nations will stand to lose because it has made colonialism the foundation of its society. Looking at the issue from another angle, indigenous people should also make visible their own representations through research on their own communities and purposes. The question is what happens to the 'colonial languages'? Do we discard their use totally in order to be free from the internal colonialism?

6. Concluding Remarks

6.1. The Case for Decolonizing the Linguistic Landscape of Former Colonies

In a world that is so stratified, it is difficult for any one nation to isolate itself and communicate in a language that will insulate it from the powers that be. English has become a very powerful language because it is propagated by countries that are economically and politically powerful; countries that control the economies and the wealth of the world; countries that colonized other countries and subjected them to linguistic colonialism. It may be suicidal for Ghana to reject English, but it can accommodate English while vigorously developing its own languages. The Ghana government needs to partner with non-governmental organizations that are developing some languages into writing. Ghana Institute of Linguistics Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT), a non-governmental organization, has developed the phonologies, grammars, dictionaries, and other anthropological materials for thirty-four Ghanaian languages. The focus of the organization is to develop these languages so it can translate the Bible into the languages for their missionary work in the areas where the languages are spoken. The activities of GILLBT has not been adapted into the education of Ghanaians.

Representation of indigenous languages in mostly multilingual contexts, where there are also colonial legacy languages, is negative and without capital. The language policy of Ghana needs to be reconsidered to incorporate many Ghanaian languages into the classrooms discourse. The focus of the language policy has been on English from the colonial period to the present because of the capital it promises its users. However, bilingual education could be a middle way in making the indigenous languages work with the English for higher benefits for the nation. This type of education should have a textured linguistic policy that gives equal recognition and pragmatic functions to both languages, not only for the development of academic work, but also for the sociolinguistic growth of the culture. If countries, Ghana can be politically bold to adopt bilingual education in all basic schools (not in selected schools) and develop additional indigenous languages, then the country will be on the path to claiming recognition for indigenous languages that have been overtaken by English. Much as it is accepted that English has come to be collectively owned by native as well as non-native speakers (Widdowson, 1994), it is also instructive for former colonies, such as Ghana, to maintain their indigenous languages in order not to lose indigenous knowledge, histories, and cultures. This paper advocates a positive re-orientation of indigenous languages in former colonies to co-exist with the colonial linguistic legacies without yielding to hegemonic overtures from the latter group. It is a call for a national consideration of Ghana's language policy and a change of the colonial mindset by Ghanaians.

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