Challenging colonial perspectives in the Ghanaian basic school curriculum using culturally responsive pedagogy

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Thesis for B.A. degree
International Studies in Education
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Abstract

Research affirms that Ghana's education is heavily reliant on the colonial structures that were modeled by the British. Ghana is perpetually battling with alteration of the beliefs, languages, and structural constraints inherited from colonialism. The cultural interactions between the colonized and their colonial masters have resulted in hybrid people who are attracted but also repulsed by Western canons. The central argument of this paper was that although Ghana has implemented several reforms to improve education quality, the educational system suffers from a typical colonial-mentality syndrome. The curriculum undermines indigenous cultures while accentuating Western dominance in students. This project conducted a review of relevant literature on decolonization and culturally relevant pedagogy to explore how the latter can challenge the former. The study delineates colonial schooling by adopting the neocolonial and postcolonial lenses. A three-fold dimension of culturally relevant pedagogy to be adopted by basic schools in Ghana as a tool to decolonized education provision was professed. Institutional, instructional and personal dimensions of culturally relevant pedagogy emphasize the creation of a cultural-oriented atmosphere, adoption of culturally appropriate pedagogy, and a teacher-learner relationship on acceptance of cultural diversity among students, respectively.

Keywords: Colonialism, Neocolonialism, Decolonization, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP), teaching pedagogy, standardized test, basic school, postcolonialism,
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<tr>
<td>CRP</td>
<td>Culturally Relevant Pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RME</td>
<td>Religious and Moral Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAEC</td>
<td>West African Examination Council</td>
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</table>
Preface

Having been through the mill from the basics to the higher institutions, coupled with my experiences as a trained teacher for over a decade, and further studies at the University of Iceland got me quite anxious about the curriculum contents and practices of the Ghanaian educational system. These lived experiences and knowledge stirred up the fervor and interest to tread on well-chattered waters, hence this topic as my final project. I wish to express my profound gratitude to the Almighty God for seeing me through the course successfully. I would thank Abena Acheampomaa Darko for introducing the course to me and being a great pillar to my survival in Iceland. Akumaa, I am forever indebted to you. To Kofi Darko, my I.T. and referencing professor, my deep and sincere gratitude.

I am highly indebted to my Supervisor Brynja E. Halldórsdóttir and Susan E. Gollifer (Cosupervisor) for their immense interest in my topic and making out time out of their busy schedule to read through my paper, emails, and reaching out on Zoom during the pandemic. I say thank you for your invaluable guidance throughout the project, providing me with materials and links that I could not possibly have discovered on my own. Thank you for your pieces of advice and for being patient with me even when I could not submit some chapters at the stipulated time frame. I am thankful to my mother and my siblings for their prayers, words of encouragement, and for taking good care of my children in Ghana. To my kids Josephine and Jaeden, and my husband, thanks for hanging in there without me all these while. I know my mere expression of thanks likewise does not suffice.

This thesis was written solely by me, the undersigned. I have read and understood the university code of conduct and have followed them to the best of my knowledge. I have correctly cited all other works or previous work of my own, including, but not limited to, written works, figures, data, or tables.

Reykjavik, May 18, 2020

Judith Asante
1 Introduction

This section of the project provides a detailed discussion of the background and rationale behind the project. It comprises a brief review of the nature of Ghana’s education as bequeathed to us by the colonizers. The chapter outlines the project objective and questions and the project's structure. My personal experience has influenced my desire to embark on this project.

1.1 Background and rationale

I graduated in 2015 with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychological Foundations in English from the University of Cape Coast in Ghana after completing three years of teacher's Certificate "A" and a teaching diploma in 2002 and 2004, respectively. I have taught at the compulsory level up to primary six (6th grade) from 2002 to 2017. I have acquired extensive experience in the basic school curriculum, teacher efficacy, and teacher-learner exchange as a teacher. In the 15 years teaching endeavor, I have had several conversations with local and state education policymakers, especially on basic school curriculum and the link with colonial legacy. My teaching experience has enabled me to understand and identify the teaching-learning process and complexities inherent in the overexposure to Eurocentric and colonial perspectives in the primary school curriculum.

As a teacher, I noticed that despite national school policies to make Ghanaian culture and language a part of the school system, there is less emphasis on culturally relevant literature addressing local issues, culture, and history in our schools. A lack of emphasis on African literary canons in or their omission from the curriculum content is a significant challenge when one considers the relevance of handing down culture to succeeding generations. Ghanaian students are always surrounded by Fairy Tale storybooks such as Cinderella, Snow White, just to mention a few. The attitudes of both the education experts and policymakers and the citizens are biased towards Western knowledge, language, and cultures since they are regarded as civilized and approved ways to go by in the society. Television programs reinforced these characters as the main fictitious role models in my childhood, and the English Language came to represent a symbol of status and power.

Given this context, the purpose of my capstone project is to conduct a review of the literature that explores how pedagogical discourse in schools keep perpetuating
dichotomies of the colonized and the colonizer. I am not suggesting that western canons should be removed outright from the school system in Ghana, as that would be a clear situation of throwing the baby out with the bathwater. I am arguing that there needs to be a more critical approach to selecting and using this literature and more emphasis placed on the minority cultures in the classroom. In this respect, I am interested in identifying how culturally responsive pedagogy can challenge the "colonization of the mind" that takes place as a result of overexposure to colonial perspectives (D'errico, 2011). To advocate for an integrated approach of both the western and local contents in the Ghanaian primary school curriculum so that students will align with their culture and those that transcend national borders.

1.2 Cognitive development
The decision to undertake this project at the lower primary level (four-eight years) is because of my experience and partly to the fact that the formative years of the child are very crucial to the development of a holistic personality. It marks the transition from the home to the school and, at the same time, plays a significant role in framing their future (Unicef, 2014). In this light, policies guiding the teaching and learning processes in schools must be tailored towards developmental relevant pedagogy to effectively nurture their cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Gracy, 2017). At this developmental stage, educators must ensure pedagogical discourse, instructional materials, and learning environs are congruous with the concrete and intellectual abilities as well as the social and emotional needs of the child (Gracy, 2017). Piaget asserts that children at the intuitive stage could fully understand concepts and begin to reason logically. At the intuitive stage (4-7years), they are curious and, as such, question the how and why in their environment (Gracy, 2017)

1.3 Project questions
The overarching question asked: How can culturally responsive pedagogy be used as a tool to challenge colonial perspectives? To attain this purpose, two sub-questions guided the project.

- What are the characteristics and dimensions of culturally responsive pedagogy?
- What are the roles of the educator in a culturally responsive classroom?
1.4 Project objectives
The main objective of this project is to conduct a review of relevant literature on
decolonization in the context of education and culturally relevant pedagogy to explore
how the latter can challenge the former. The discussion will be used to develop a set of
recommendations aimed at promoting culturally responsive pedagogy at the compulsory
school level in Ghana°.

1.5 Structure of the project
The project comprises four chapters. This first chapter discusses the background and
rationale behind the project, the problem statement, contributions of the project, the
objectives, and enduring questions that guided the review, and the cognitive dimension
of the project are also presented. The second chapter of the project traces the contours
of colonialism through the neocolonial and postcolonial lenses and talks about the
meaning, characteristics, and dimensions of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). The third
chapter provides justification for applying culturally responsive pedagogy in decolonizing
the curriculum at the basic school level. The fourth chapter makes Concluding remarks
and recommendations.

1.6 Significance of the project
Adopting the neocolonial and postcolonial lenses on the education system reveals
outsiders' influence on educational policies and chequered history of educational policies
by successive governments from independence. It was imperative to take a critical
examination at the ubiquitous Eurocentrism in the Ghanaian basic school curriculum that
has persisted to date. This capstone project would also add to the available body of
literature on the decolonizing plan of the school curriculum. I hope that the findings
would serve as a wake-up call to policy formulators and educators to stump out the
coloniality of knowledge in the Ghanaian educational context using a CRP.
2 Literature Review

This chapter comprises two sections. In the first section, I explore the contours of colonialism through the neocolonial and postcolonial lenses. The second section of the chapter talks about the meaning, characteristics, and dimensions of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP).

2.1 Colonial school and culturally responsive pedagogy

Colonialism is the state where one falls under the complete jurisdiction and authority of another country. In effect, one group subjugates the other. Usually, some citizens of the colonial power settle in the colonized land, formulating laws, making judgments, and dictating their affairs (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012).

Ghana, formerly known as the Gold Coast, is in Sub-Saharan Africa ("Ghana Country Profile," 2018). It has 16 administrative regions and is very diverse in culture, ethnicity, religion, language, and geography (Know the 16 Regional Capitals of Ghana, 2019). However, large towns and cities reflect the multicultural and multilingual elements of the country, and education has bridged the gap between the different tribes and people (Osseo-Asare, 2017).

Before the coming of the Europeans, Ghanaians operated an informal system in socializing the people through the traditions, values, language, and beliefs of the society (Pinto, 2019). Parents, grandparents, kin, uncles, aunts, were obliged to teach the children and youth their music, dance, history, survival skills, and taboos (Pinto, 2019). The entire community partook in the socialization process of children and the youth in the Ghanaian society. (Pinto, 2019). By way of illustration, an heir apparent to the throne is secluded for an extended period and given specialized training on leadership and responsibility roles, cultural practices, taboos, and so forth by elders of the clan among the Akans of Ghana (Pinto, 2019).

Western formal education started in the European forts and castles in Accra and Cape coast 1592 in the then Gold Coast. The European merchants started the schools in their castles to educate their children and other children of renowned families in the Gold Coast (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016). With distinct aims of creating a privileged class of persons to run the colony, to the training of interpreters for European merchandising businesses. Records have it that 6.6% of Ghanaian school-aged children were enrolled in schools after independence (Adzahlie-Mensah & Dunne, 2018). Thus, formal education in
the then Gold Coast was not meant for the ordinary indigenes of the land but wealthy merchants, children, and relatives of prominent chiefs, and mainly for the mixed-race children of the European merchants by African women (Ansah, 2014).

The missionaries also build schools to train catechize and teachers to Christianize the local people through propagating the gospel and reading of the bible (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016). Thus, the central idea was to make intellectual instruction march hand in hand with preaching the gospel. The Missionaries religiously indoctrinated their converts, which made them see everything evil, superstitious, and fetish about their African Traditional values and practices (Acquah, 2011). The bias against the African traditional religion ensued in the backlash and confrontation that followed between the Basel Missionaries and their new converts versus the traditional indigenous believers (Acquah, 2011). The mission, therefore, decided to build separate quarters to segregate the new converts from the rest of the indigenous community who they referred to as pagans (Acquah, 2011). This micro-community created within the macro community was known Salem but was referred to as Obroni krom literally translated as the white man’s town (Acquah, 2011).

The British later came in to colonize the country from 1867-1957 and used the schools as the catalyst in imposing and transmitting their language, culture, and knowledge. These long periods of interaction with European merchants, coupled with the activities of Christian Missionaries and a long-standing history of colonization for almost a century, led to the subjugation of the indigenous socio-political, economic, cultural, linguistic, epistemological, and educational systems in the Gold coast.

2.2 The context of Ghana relating to culture and colonization

As outlined in the previous sections of this project, Ghana’s education policies, even after its independence, have not departed significantly from the British education strands that were bequeathed to us. In formulating strategies to meet the demands of the country and the expectations of citizens, governments have, at the same time, had to embark on global initiatives to meet universal ideals and standardization (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016). The interplay of these cultures has created a hybrid people who are attracted to western canons and, at the same time, repulsed by them.
2.2.1 Neocolonialism

Neo-colonialism is a term coined by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana (Guy, 2010). It refers to the indirect use of the economic models, globalization, and cultural imperialism to continuously subjugate former colonies though having achieved independence (Smith, 1996). Despite Nkrumah’s view of Ghanaian education to producing students that are not only scientifically and technically oriented but also culturally inclined, education delivery in Ghana is still heavily hinged on British culture (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016). There seems to be no absolute outside to the incongruities that have been created in the Ghanaian society owing to the interplay of the cultures of the colonized and the colonizer.

Ghana has signed on to several educational frameworks under the watch of international organizations like the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). However, despite UNESCO’s admonishing of states to embed their cultural elements in their school curricula, states in developing countries like Ghana still face challenges in complying with such directives. Monetary consequences of complying with such policies have led some developing nations to solicit for funding from outside sources.

In Ghana, discourses on the influence of international agencies like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank on the education system have garnered attention, and many stakeholders have sounded cautions. In the past three decades, funding from the IMF and the World Bank have increased. The IMF and the World Bank give educational supports in the form of loans and expertise to Ghana to improve infrastructure and education sector quality (Alexander, 2001). However, cautions have been sounded about the domination of these institutions and their western ideologies in our schools because of the potential of their influence in denigrating Ghana's cultural heritage (Dei, 2004). Adjustment loan from the IMF and World Banks more often than not conflict with the objectives for education, since the educational budget comprises a significant proportion of the country's financial plan. Adjustment policies habitually alter the components of education expenditure (Alexander, 2001). The rippling social effects of the sAP's in some countries have been conceded by the WorldBank(Alexander, 2001).
Coincidentally, this has become the case where the loans coming from institutions like the IMF and World Bank have conditionalities attached to them. These policies from the World Bank and the International Money Fund (IMF) have structured our educational system in such a way that it fits international standards and precludes indigenous knowledge (Dei, 2004; Kwapong, 1992). Our developmental systems as a nation have been infiltrated by western ideals in that they directly or indirectly perpetuate and valorize colonial knowledge. So, instead of developing individuals with a sense of belonging to society with history and culture (Adjei, 2007), it, unfortunately, transmits unfamiliar cultures that do not allow the student to reclaim their voice, place, and history of the social and educational context.

Several scholars and literature have stated that Africa's schooling institutions are an extension of colonialism, paving the way for the continuous violation, the racialization of colonial ideologies of distinction and superiority (Asgharzadeh & Dei, 2001; Harber, 2004; London, 2002; Macedo, 1999). Hofstede's cultural dimension stipulates that the Ghanaian society is more communalistic and that it is in sharp contrast with most of the Western cultures, which are more individualistic (Agodzo, 2014). In Ghana, students wish to establish an interpersonal relationship with their teacher. Hence, in school, they prefer to be treated as members of a family who are valued and appreciated. The colonial school structures and practices are seen as a way to continuously perpetuate western dominance by alienating people from their cultural knowledge, producing stable gender hierarchies and creating a desire for very limited or non-existent modern sector jobs and western goods (Adjei, 2007; Kuepie et al., 2006; Leach, 2012; Lugones, 2007; Mazrui, 1978). There has, however, been a recent reform in the educational system that is geared towards the reclaiming and repositioning of the Ghanaian child's identity and knowledge processes that leads to meaningful learning in schools. For the first time history has been incorporated in the basic school syllabus (GHStudents, 2019)

2.2.2 Postcolonialism
Postcolonialism is the systematic investigation of the consequences of colonialization that took place in various forms through culture (Osseo-Asare, 2017). Edward Said devised the term postcolonialism (Said, 1979). The implications of the colonialists' activities in sub-Saharan Africa permeate every facet of the lives of the Africans. Colonial
The European culture (specifically the British culture) has dominated Ghanaian homes due to colonization (Adzahlie-Mensah, 2019). And this has gravely eaten into social and behavioral norms and policies to a degree where most the rich and some middle-income Ghanaians have become or are becoming grossly unaware of the realities of their own culture (Adzahlie-Mensah, 2019). Lawino, the wife of Ocol, affirms that formal education has led to the death of her husband in the ways of his people (P'Bitek, 1986). "He now abuses all this Acoli" (mother tongue). He says the "ways of black people are black" (P'Bitek, 1986). Thus, most colonies and, for that matter, Ghana is in a perpetual state of battling with alteration of their beliefs, languages, and imposition of western culture since they do not rhyme with their cosmic world view.

Boahen (2007) also attests to this by pointing to the consequences of colonial education that is being authenticated in Ghanaian schools as that which disenfranchises and disengages students in their cultural language and history. This puts students at a crossroads where they get to grips with educational tasks while working under cultural circumstances unfamiliar to their home setting" (Gay, 2002a). The kind of lost identity and confusion that Gabriel Okara versifies in his postcolonial poem, "Piano and Drums." Where the wailing piano from a distant land distorts the rhythm from the indigenous drum, in like manner, Kobina Sekyi's Blinkards is a brilliant satire on how Fanti elite in Cape coast assimilated the Victorian English ideals, idiosyncrasy, dressing, after having traveled abroad. Sekys Ridiculing the infuriating show of Ghanaians who are not highly proficient in their native language nor the English language but parade themselves in their locality speaking bad English with a forced nativelike accent and eating European delicacies while yearning for traditional Ghanaian dishes (Nyamekye, & Debrah, 2016). In the following succeeding sub-sections, I delineated some of the colonial legacies that seem to linger at the core of Ghana's education.

### 2.2.3 Language policies

The partitioning of the African continent broke down the defenses of ethnic-based states that existed in Africa, which led to the merging of super-diverse ethnic communities under one colonial administration (Osseo-Asare, 2017). The super-diverse
nature of these nation-states in Africa, coupled with heightened dynamics in movement patterns and languages, led to the adoption of the colonial tongue as their Lingua Franca after Independence, of which Ghana is no exception (Osseo-Asare, 2017). The changing trends of people with different linguistic forms and social conditions have created a nexus complexity of language communities and communication as they affiliate and secede with diverse groups (Vertovec, 2007).

Sir Gordon Guggisberg passed the first official language policy in the Gold Coast in 1925. It proposed a bilingual language approach where the mother tongue is used as a medium of instruction at the lower level (Ansah, 2014). Thereafter other reforms have been implemented, which is either in favor of the English language as the language of instruction or not. Ghana seems to be in a fix when it comes to choosing an indigenous language and a language of instruction in schools. Reforms on the medium of instruction in Ghanaian compulsory schools oscillate between the mother tongue and the English language. The inconsistencies were due to the continuous disagreement on the medium of instruction. Either to use the local language or English or to strike a balance between both languages. Owing to this, what is sometimes referred to as the mother tongue of a city in Ghana lacks a clear definition and is sometimes limited to be the dominant language in the locality.

Table 1 Language of Instruction policy in Ghana from 1529 to 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source: Owu-Ewie (2006, p. 77)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PERIOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1529-1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Castle School Era</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Missionary Era</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925-1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-1955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956-1966</td>
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<tr>
<td>1967-1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-2002 (Sept)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key + = Ghanaian language as the medium of instruction
- = English language as the medium of instruction

From the table above, it is evident that Ghanaian language was not used as a medium of instruction in the basic school, that is, from grades 1 to 4. The English language remained the official language used as instruction in schools. Ansah (2014) elucidate that there was no official language policy during the castle school era, and the medium of instruction was contingent on the European group that was in control of the colony at that time. The use of the Ghanaian language as a medium of instruction in school became predominant during the Missionary era. Even with that, grade 4 continued using the English language whiles the implementation of the Ghanaian language remained with grades 1 to 3. Ghana is made up of different ethnic groups who speak different languages and dialects; due to this, different Ghanaian languages were used in the school setting depending on the ethnic group.

Ansah (2014) posits that the mission schools in Ghana were independent of each other and therefore practiced different language policies. Whereas the Wesleyan policy towards education in the Gold Coast was based on English, the Bremen adopted a mother tongue educational policy based on the locality in which they operated (Agbedor, 1994). But for the 1970’s reforms, the language of instruction in all subjects apart from the local language from the 4th grade to the high institutions has been the colonial tongue. At the same time, English remains a subject on the curriculum until the 4th grade, where it becomes the medium of instruction.

In Africa, many have argued that children's deficiency in literacy and their process have been associated with the use of European languages like French and English as the mode of teaching and interaction in schools (Graham et al., 2015). The emphasis on literacy is not to judge people's reading and writing abilities alone, but also to ascertain the person's level of mastery of the language and understanding of the local culture (Whitehead, 2010). Indeed there are several works of literature on the change in language policy among the lower grades.

Montagu and Watson (1979) explained in their work that communication serves as the middle ground of discussion and the bedrock of any given society. If this "meeting" and "community" atmosphere are not present in the classroom, most students struggle, and learning becomes an impossible task for most of them. The function of the teachers' communication efficacy enables them to ascertain the various demands and the essential interventions that students from diverse cultural and ethnic strata of our societies bring into the school. Engaging in intellectual and critical discourses is influenced by how well
an individual is conversant with the ethnic codes of the community. Therefore, one needs to understand a person's culture since it is closely linked to the intellectual conception (Cazden, John, & Hymes, 1985). It implies that how students communicate is primarily influenced by the level of their acculturation. Instructing students with diverse entering behaviors calls for the teachers to understand the communication codes by completely being able to understand the dynamism of interactions existing within groups and between individuals regarding the student's culture and their way of learning.

It has been realized that students who encounter a lack of coherence in the utilization of the home language at school are frequently misconstrued in class (Lovelace & Wheeler, 2006). If prior experience forms the basis of new learning, then one cannot ignore the home culture or way of communicating during pedagogical interactions. It has been noticed that students who hardly speak in class are usually verbally expressive when in small groups or when with friends outside because, in such scenarios, they control the discussion. They are not malign by culture and are therefore able to express themselves more verbally.

2.2.4 Curriculum content and assessment

The curriculum content of textbooks used in Ghanaian schools reflected high Eurocentrism during the colonial era, for that matter, the Nkrumah government after independence tried to address the prevalent Eurocentrism in the curriculum by changing the readers that offered glimpses into the lives of others and exposed students to other cultures to the detriment of their culture (Kuyini, 2013). He also established an Arts council, and the Institute of African Studies was established in 1961 to promote art and culture all over Ghana (Emmanuel, Bonney, 2009). However, the issue persists to date. Critics are of the view that the schools reflect what transpires in the larger society (Giroux, 2002). It holds that knowledge is socially constructed and that the curriculum content serves to buttress the dominant concepts of community. However, the school should not recognize rhetoric while debasing others (Apple, 2005). Bernstein (2000) posits that determining curriculum courses is an act of power that signifies legal and valorized knowledge. In comparing the content of the colonial syllabus to the current one reveals that there have not been noteworthy changes to that effect.

The West African examination council (WAEC) determines the assessment and evaluation of English-speaking west African students at the junior high and senior high levels. However, WAEC was developed by the British in anglophone West African in 1950.
As a result, their assessment and evaluation criteria are based on a system developed by the British to synchronize and standardize pre-tertiary examinations. As part of this system, final external testing is required before students could gain admission into tertiary institutions. The final grade of students comprises of 70% of their score from the final external examination conducted by (WAEC) and 30% of their continuous assessment in their respective schools.

The WAEC examination for junior high and senior high students follows the same scoring procedure (Johnstone, 2008). The Senior High School Certificate Examinations were structured to ensure "a British style which reinforced wide reliance on rote learning" (Woolman, 2001, p. 36). This kind of assessment is based on memorizing content through repeated recitations without students' full comprehension of the material. Based on the free senior high school policy instituted by the New Patriotic Party government in 2018, students are required to score between aggregate 6 to 25 to be enrolled in a senior high school. Aggregate 6 is the best performance (NewsGhana, 2020).

2.2.5 Social structure and power relations

Teaching and learning processes that are characterized by a master-servant relationship, oppressive, and discrimination pedagogy during the colonial era still permeate the current school system (Agbenyega, 2006), and is perceived in the trend of corporal punishment used in enforcing discipline in the classroom. Among other things are pinching, knocking, ear pulling, caning, kneeling on the floor (Agbenyega, 2006). Ghanaian Students in this context are passive learners counting on their teachers to pour their knowledge to them. Again, morning assemblies are organized to show a hierarchy between teachers and students. Students are subjected to morning drills where they are expected to comply quickly and precisely without hesitation else end up being flogged by teachers.

The 21st Ghanaian classroom is still characterized by power relations, where teachers exercise their authority over students at all levels. These relationships are supported by the culture of the country where the adult’s imposition and subjugation of children are taken as normal or natural as breathing. The same head-subordinate exchanges and dictatorial pedagogy still permeates higher institutions like the colleges of education.
where student-trainees have little opportunity to engage teacher educators in dialogue on contents to learn and modes to determine the contents.

The expectations and convictions of learners and instructors are indeed affected by observable classroom behaviors, especially in the Ghanaian context (Pajares, 1992). A Common parlance among the Ghanaian society is, "Children are supposed to be seen, and not to be heard." Children are best noted to adhere to instructions given by the adults and without recourse to the source. It is disrespectful, equivalent to heavy punishment when children are seen arguing or questioning the knowledge of the elderly. This has seeped into our schools. Teachers and people in high authority are revered since they exercise power over their subordinates, in this case, students. It is not farfetched that both formal and informal curricular in the Ghanaian school context play a significant vector in the coloniality of knowledge.

In the typical Ghanaian school system, the dominant interactive mode between teachers and school children is a passive-receptive type. Similarly, most Ghanaian ethnic groups go by this style of communication. Usually, the active role is played by the speaker, and the one listening is supposed to be passive all the time. Students are required to listen attentively while the teacher is talking and only speak at given times with permission from the teacher, usually by raising hands. The only way they can participate is by asking questions to clear some confusion or lack of understanding or answering questions from teachers for the teacher to affirm if the students truly understand (Goodlad, 1984; Philips, 1983). This pattern seems to be generally the same in schools across the country.

2.2.6 Time allotment to subjects on the timetable

The time allotted to courses indicates their relative significance within a hierarchy of curriculum knowledge. Within Ghanaian primary schools, the English Language takes up over 25% of curriculum time per week compared to Ghanaian language, which is allocated around seven percent in the lower primary and just over nine percent in upper primary (Adzahlie-Mensah & Dunne, 2018). Notwithstanding, the language of instruction for all other subjects in the curriculum is the English language which inadvertently, communicates a strong message about the hierarchical importance of the English language and culture compared to Ghanaian language and culture.
Further, the opportunities to express local culture through Creative Arts are restricted to 30 minutes (2.3%) per week in the lower primary and 60 minutes (4.9%) in the upper primary. Similarly, the potential space to discuss national identity, culture, and citizenship values in Citizenship Education had no time allocation in the lower primary (1st – 3rd grade) and only 30 minutes per week or 2.3% of all teaching time in upper primary (Adzahlie-Mensah & Dunne, 2018). From table 2, and in comparison, with the other subjects, the English language is prioritized over the other subjects, hence given more periods. It is fascinating that the English language is used as a medium of instruction when teaching the remaining subjects except for the Ghanaian language. From the same table, the Ghanaian language is allocated eight periods whiles English is allocated ten periods weekly in the lower primary. With regards to the upper primary, Ghanaian language is given six periods for the week whiles English remains ten periods.

Table 2 The number of weekly periods in both the lower and upper primary schools in Ghana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Periods</th>
<th>Lower primary</th>
<th>Upper primary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National language</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental studies</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated sciences</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious and moral education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music and dance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total weekly periods</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2.7 Religious education

For most people, Africans and Ghanaians, in particular, are neck-deep in religious issues more than anything else, and that shapes their worldview and participation in social life (Mbiti, 1990). Religious and Moral Education (RME) in Ghana is centered on the three major
Religions, thus the Christian, Islamic, and the Traditional African Religion. Guggisberg’s 16 principles validated the efforts of schools toward the teaching of religion in the Gold coast (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2010). The course content of the RME textbook used in Basic schools of Ghana is 70% Christian religious studies and practices, and teachers end up projecting their religion because they are not well versed in the other religious practices (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2010). It is also interesting to note that that RME is taught and examined through mainly Christian perspectives that reflect the missionary roots of education in Africa. The pervasive role of content knowledge cannot be downplayed in every Educational context since it reinforces the dominant ideals of students in the community, hence debasing the minority cultures and beliefs.

2.3 Colonial school and culturally responsive pedagogy
CRP is defined as the learner-centered perspective of facilitating lessons where a student’s distinctive cultural strengths are noted and consciously developed to help improve their performance as well as recognizing student's contentment about their cultural identity on the globe (Gay, 2002a). It has been perceived as "unpredictable art always in the process of becoming"(Ladson-Billings, 2009). Culturally responsive instruction is based on the understanding that the teacher builds on the entering characteristics of students relating to their cultures rather than ignoring such strengths or expecting them to learn through an act that goes contrary to them (Au, 2001).

In 2000, Professor Geneva Gay communicated that CRP links students' cultural experiences, previous knowledge, and learning approaches to intellectual skills in ways approved ways that are cognisant to students. CRP means having representation and validation of the cultures of every student in the class ((Dixson & Fasching-Varner, 2009; Gay, 2000). Recent studies have proven that culturally responsive pedagogy is instrumental in bridging the widening gap among students of different ethnic groups as well as recognizing the diverse ethnicity of the students in the class (Dickson & Fernandez 2015; Sleeter 2012).

2.3.1 Dimensions of CRP
CRP is functionally categorized into three dimensions, which are the instructional dimension, the institutional dimension, and the personal dimension (Richards et al., 2007).
With the institutional dimension, the focus is on reforming the social elements that influence the school's structures and operations and procedures. It as well includes involving the community in which the school is situated. In the case of the personal dimension, the teacher learns to become culturally responsive in making decisions. The instructional dimension deals with the activities and procedures encountered in effecting and integrating societal customs in class (Richards et al., 2007).

**2.4 Characteristics of a culturally responsive curriculum**

Firstly, it should integrate knowledge from multiple fields (Scherer, 1992; Spears et al., 1990; Banks, 2001). Adopting culturally relevant literature that transcends one's cultural background widens their horizon (Schwarzer et al., 2003). Per their research, a student's native literacy and cultural history should be seen as an essential resource rather than an obstacle to their learning.

Secondly, activities should be meaningful, child-focused learning, and directed to the culture of the child (Chion−Kenny, 1994; Dickerson, 1993). Teachers, as much as possible, should try and relate to students' families and communities and regard them in culturally accurate ways as they honor and respect their home culture (Delpit, 2006; Sleeter, 2012). With culturally responsive teaching, the teacher shapes education and learning in such a way that students can work with each other as well as the teacher while seeing each other as partners. This dramatically improves students' performances and achievements.

Thirdly, it should develop a high order knowledge and skills base of the learner (Hilliard, 1992; Villegas, 1991). High order knowledge and skill are first grounded in lower-order skills such as differentiation, basic implementation, and investigation that are linked to students' previous experience, after which students are exposed to unfamiliar cultures, problems, and questions (Goodson & Rohani, 1998). The integration of both indigenous and western culture in curricula is believed to produce an all-round student who has in-depth knowledge about his immediate environment and culture and a global perspective to analyzing and making accurate judgments about different concepts. Making inferences, justify conclusions while drawing on their knowledge and understanding could help solve cropping major issues locally and on the global stage.

Fourthly, it should make use of a range of learning approaches like collaborative learning, whole, and diverse learning styles (Gay, 2000). Combining different models,
according to Nunan (2015), makes the learning process interactive and helps learners to reach comprehension of the material. Empirical studies posit no single method to fit all situations in the classroom processes since each method has its' advantages and disadvantages. CRP enjoins teachers to choose from among methods recognizing and acknowledging the uniqueness in a principled manner.

2.5 Application of CRP in education

Employing culturally responsive pedagogy is by displaying in the classroom visuals and learning materials that reflect student's ethnic experiences. The unavailability of pertinent cultural pictures and teacher learning resources creates an unpleasant atmosphere for the learner (Nieto, 2000). That is to say, the physical environment of the school should, to some extent, reflect life at home, giving them a sense of calm and comfortability to express themselves (Nieto, 2000). This helps the students to see the school as their second home. Students at the formative level, need a smooth transition from the home school and that the school environment should affirm their culture and language.

How people imbibe knowledge mostly differ across cultures (Pewewardy, 1993). The teacher must gain an understanding of the culture of each student to maximize their learning opportunities. Understanding students' way of life would afford educators them to be aware of how students think or perceive things and their behavioral patterns, thereby knowing how best to communicate knowledge to the student.

A mandate for change requires that racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse students could meet their learning challenges with the strength and relevance that is reminiscent of cultural frame of reference (Cazden et al., 1985). Thus the teacher must ensure that students thoroughly understand the basic demands of the culture of each student and how it affects their learning behavior, as well as developing a classroom setting to allow the student to feel free to create novel ideas.

Irvine (1990), in his research, contended with the dreath of what she characterized as "cultural synchronization" amongst African American students and educators. She scrutinized the baseline exchanges in the classroom, the "mid-level" official context. Thus the school structure, interactions, communication style, and the forms of punitive measures applied from top to bottom. In his work, Perry (1993) added to Irvine's work by
including the narratives of the learning conditions of the African American students. Though all the factors Irvine counts, the historical academic struggle, when added, could help the teacher to understand the student more. Goe, Bell & Little, (2008) conclude that to become an effective teacher goes beyond the mere provision of the curriculum or using a single criterion to ascertain students’ task accomplishment. They discovered that culturally responsive pedagogy should be of integral importance for effective teaching.

2.5.1 CRP and cultural identity

Porter and Samovar (1991) add to the existing literature by stating that culture influences what people discuss, how they talk about it, their point of view, their actions or inactions, and their thought processes. Hence culture is very imperative in the context of school learning. It offers the conditions that shape the thoughts of learners and gives the references that are appropriate for children to construct their understanding. Within the education fraternity, it is essential to emphasize that any form of pedagogy that emphasizes the cultural basis of society also offers access to quality and equitable education. This is because such pedagogies recognize the value of teaching students with references to their culture (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Using cultural referents in teaching serves to be a bridge and equally nurture the subservient culture simultaneously with the dominant culture. CRP promotes a conducive atmosphere where students are not tensed up in their classroom but free to use their cultural referents, and language in developing their understanding of curriculum contents. Theoretical frameworks of learning and understanding are achieved at the individual, as well as the interpersonal exchange between students. Hence education is not only a cognitive activity that takes place only in mind but also understood as that which requires a vibrant social and cultural context for the learning (Littleton & Mercer, 2013; Vygotsky, 1978). Teachers need to realize that teaching is not only an instance of getting into the mind of the child but understanding the environment in which the child feels comfortable and can operate as well.

2.5.2 Group versus individual orientation

The cultural orientation of most ethnic groups in Ghana is founded on the welfare of the group (Au, 2001). The group they find themselves in takes precedence over their
ambition or success (Au & Mason, 1981; cited in Au, 2001). They, therefore, tend to be group minded and look for a collective win where everybody succeeds as opposed to individualism, where the British systems award the individual who comes first or second or third. That is not to say. Individual needs are neglected in such cultures. Instead, they become fulfilled within their groups. Research also proposed a shift from the passive solitary activity of learning to a collaborative one where students discuss and communicate ideas in groups creating meaning for themselves (Laal & Ghodsi, 2012).

2.6 Chapter summary
This chapter reviewed relevant literature on how Ghana’s education keeps perpetuating colonization of the minds of students. Among the issues raised are policies, pedagogic contents, power relations, standardized testing, and alienation of indigenous cultures that do not align with the cognitive, social, and emotional development of students. The role and significance of culture were also discussed, and it became evident that students’ cultural references are an indispensable tool in the for a more in-depth understanding of concepts in the classroom. CRP was also explained into details, touching on the meaning, characteristics, and significance and how it could be applied in the instructional process by teachers.
3 Discussion

This chapter defines decolonization and discusses how Ladson-billings CRP could be employed as a tool in challenging the colonial perspective in the primary school curriculum. Moritz Joseph Brown coined the term decolonization in 1932 in his article "Imperialism" (Betts, 2012). Decolonization is the opposite of colonization. It refers to the colonized state that sets itself free from the colonial power (Hack, 2008). Colonialism in the Ghanaian education context has been sustained through the curriculum, institutional structures, and power relations, language of instruction, and so forth.

It appears conceivable that if we make alterations to school policies and procedures, techniques adopted during instructions, interactions between teacher and students, community involvement, and cultural references, it will create an enabling environment for Ghanaian students' holistic development. The three-fold dimensions of CRP, when applied, would help decolonize the minds of teachers, students, administrators as well as the community.

3.1 Instructional dimension

The Instructional dimension of the culturally responsive pedagogy does not only ensure that educators impart theoretical sound pedagogy but also provide diverse methodologies and culturally relevant materials during teaching, (Cox, McIntosh, Reaso, & Terenzini, 2011). CRP enjoins educators to dispense of their duties with open-mindedness. Hence they strive to know more about their students' background, language, and interest to be in a better position to motivate and provide them with the needed help to scaffold their learning (Richards et al., 2007). In doing so, teachers are reflective of what and why in the classroom.

Not only what knowledge is important but also whose knowledge is important in the curricula, what and whose interests such knowledge serves, and how the curriculum and pedagogy serve (or do not serve) differing interests (Cohen, Morrrison, & Manion, 2007, p. 31).

Informed by the above quotation, educators must continuously question the reason behind their selection of learning aids, literature, and classroom interactions to generate an effective and efficient learning experience for all students (Shin, 2011). By way of illustration, decisions on the choice of activities and learning materials must be geared
towards the diverse needs of students, to help them to connect with the subject matter for deeper understanding and analysis.

3.2 Institutional dimension

In an analysis of the institutional culture in the context of education, Bingham and Nix (2011) outlined that institutional culture encompasses the policies, beliefs, and practices within the school that affect teachers, leadership styles, and students. The methods which are commonly referred to as "the way we do our things here" are the constellation of conventions that have been practiced in the school for an extended period and have become associated with the school (Scott, & Davies, Mannion, Marshall, & Scott 2003).

The institutional culture is, therefore, the outlook of the school. The institutional dimension of CRP emphasizes the implication of institutional policies and how instructional methods are planned. The institutional stage requires concentrating on administrative procedures and, at the same time, building a cordial relationship between all stakeholders and how teaching impacts the circumstances offered for students to experience learning. It promotes a top-down as well as a bottom-up approach to disseminating information and communication.

3.2.1 CRP and power relations

Teacher-learner relationships should be one that would ensure a two-way communication affair where students are free to contribute, share, or ask questions in the classroom without fear of intimidation or punishment. Culturally relevant pedagogy also ensures a cordial relationship among students since they know about the culture and, at the same time valuing and recognizing other student's cultures (Ladson-Billings, 2009). CRP stumps out administrative bottlenecks and promotes power-sharing among administrators, teachers, students, and the community. Thus it embraces all stakeholders to participate in the policymaking process to effect a smooth formulation and implementation of policies.

Literature reveals most policies on education were terminated before they had yield results because the opinions of all stakeholders were not considered, and incumbent governments chose to politicize policies (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016). Culturally responsive pedagogy ensures that the administrative structures and systems of the school are based on the belief that culture is central to students' learning. Schools should prevent
situations where the culture of the majority dominates but give room for the cultures of minority groups to co-exist alongside the dominant culture.

3.2.2 Curriculum contents and assessment

CRP seeks to broaden the narrow curriculum by incorporating and integrating knowledge from different cultures and disciplines hence a useful instrument that can be used to challenge the coloniality of the minds of students. CRP aims at preparing students with a global perspective and not to limit them only to Eurocentric knowledge and world views. Educators are obliged to construct and utilize, expatiate and dismiss, create, and reconstruct knowledge and contents to suit. This pedagogy seeks to promote educational equality and open-mindedness. Geared towards making learning processes more relevant and effective.

Ladson-Billings (2009) posits that standardized tests do not overtly measure what students genuinely know since they do not include all skill areas and competencies of the content and change in behaviors expected. Standardized tests are those that expect all learners to invariably respond to the same questions consistently and assessed within a fixed framework—thus making it possible to relatively evaluate the performance of students (Berends & Boerema, 2007). In the literature review, it was realized that the mode of assessing basic school students promotes lower levels of cognition. Students are tasked to read for gist and recall information, thereby memorizing content without fully grasping their meaning. This rote learning is even evident in the troubling remarks of students "chew, pour, pass, and forget" (Awuah, 2016). According to Bloom's taxonomy, students must be encouraged to rise above the knowledge and understanding levels to knowledge analyses and application of standards (Anderson, 1999).

CRP administers varied assessment styles like peer or self-assessment like reports, annotated biographies, posters, and portfolios. These tests allow students to demonstrate various skills like analyzing, applying, evaluating, and creating novel situations with the knowledge gained that enhance their real experience about the world and themselves. CRP promotes various test that does not compare students' performances to their peers but encourage each student to grow at their interest and pace.
3.3 **Personal dimension**

Teachers can only be liable for the necessary change in students' behavior if they efficiently are trained to be culturally responsive to the different learning styles and needs of students. The personal dimension encompasses the teacher's human, social, and decisional, as well as cultural capital, which comes to play before, during, and after instruction. At the developmental level, teachers are generally perceived as the "loco parentis" and that children look up to them for acceptance and belonging (Goodson, & Rohani, 1998).

3.3.1 **Cultural capital and interpersonal relationship**

CRP urges teachers to eschew all forms of biases and stereotypes and to communicate high expectations for all students in the classroom. CRP ensures proactiveness and readiness of the educator to adjust to the changing trends in their profession since knowledge is not absolute. Current findings place the child at the center stage of the classroom while the teacher acts as a facilitator guiding and directing classroom processes (Au, 2001). Empirical studies on teaching and learning processes posit a change from a teacher-centered approach to a student-centered approach. Teachers are expected to exhibit specific categories of tendencies that inure to the qualitative development of students who are brought under their care. With CRP, teachers' cultural mindset is very imperative. The directive under CRP is that teachers are expected to build on the cultural knowledge and prior experiences of the student. That is, in selecting content and style of teaching, they must consider integrating cultural elements in their class and not placing one culture over another.

A vital dimension of the personality aspect of CRP is that of teacher's cultural competency and interpersonal relationships with learners. Interactions must be inclusive and reflect the social contexts of the learner to establish linkages with their socio-cultural dynamics. Students as well develop a high sense of pride, identity, and self-esteem about themselves.

3.4 **Chapter summary**

This chapter discussed the three dimensions of CRL as a tool for effecting changes to the dominant eurocentric knowledge and cultures outlined in the Ghanaian schools. It has
been demonstrated that CRL instigates changes in educators, instructional policies, and communities while prioritizing students' cultural references during instruction. CRP encompasses motivating students, teachers, administrators, and the members of the community to collaborate in the socialization process.
4 Conclusion

The colonial and neocolonial perspectives adopted to the study have made it clear that political freedom does not automatically guarantee the general emancipation of the colonized since these replications besides economic, cultural, and political have persisted after Ghana's independence.

Ghanaian schools were established with British perspectives, and it is within this perspective that the failures of our education have been created over time. CRP encompasses motivating students to stand out and having the conviction that they can make significant differences in their community and the world (Battiste, 2013). These three dimensions and characteristics of CRP outlined suggest ways of decolonizing the Ghanaian Basic school curriculum to make it more equitable and inclusive to all irrespective of language, culture, or race. The need for a pedagogical approach to address the diverse nature of the contemporary classroom cannot be understated. It is, therefore, no surprise that current instructional theories are advocating for a shift toward pedagogy with an emphasis on giving an equitable and academically enhancing settings for students of all ethnic, racial, and belief system (Au, 2001). By this, there must be a review of the institutional structure, language of instruction, standardized assessment, curriculum contents, and all practices of teachers and administrators.

The role of the teacher in implementing new policies could not be underestimated, so the project sought to identify the roles of the teacher in implementing CRP successfully. CRP teaches educators to be versatile to function as a professional and fit in any given context or situation.

4.1 Recommendations

The study calls for the inclusion of culturally relevant pedagogy as a course in teacher education programs so that teachers would have a broad knowledge to effectively and efficiently function in the classroom to effect the needed change in behavior of students. The district and regional education offices should run in-service training on culturally relevant pedagogy and literature for all teachers in their various communities and regions. Government and other nongovernmental agencies should invest in making local literature accessible in schools and libraries nationwide. The curriculum research and development division of Ghana should also restructure the curriculum to make it
culturally responsive and also appeal to all stakeholders in education to embrace the change so that CRP could be successfully implemented in the basic schools of Ghana.
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