MOTHER-TONGUE INFLUENCE ON THE SPOKEN ENGLISH OF ESL STUDENTS IN UPPER WEST REGION GHANA

Emmanuel Osuman
Languages Department
Nusrat Jahan Ahmadiyya College of Education
P. O. Box 71. Wa. Upper West Region.Ghana
Tel: +233201280422

Solomon A. Dansieh
Department Of General and Liberal Studies
Hilla Liman Technical University
Wa. Upper West Region. Ghana

ABSTRACT: *This paper examines the influence of Dagaare on the spoken English of Senior High School (SHS) students in the Upper West Region, Ghana whose mother tongue is Dagaare. Using the case study design, the article examines how pervasive the phenomenon is among Dagaare speakers of the English language among Senior High School students in the Upper West Region specifically and Ghana as a whole. Dagaare is in a language contact situation with the English language where the latter is the official language in Ghana. This study shows that Dagaare interferes with the spoken English of SHS students who have Dagaare as their L1 because of transfer of Dagaare linguistic features into English. This is premised on their assumption that Dagaare and English have the same speech sounds. The researcher recommends among others that the speech sounds of Ghanaian languages like Dagaare and English must be taught deliberately in order for learners of English as a second language to know their differences in order not to interchange them.*

KEYWORDS: Dagaare, Dagao, Dagaaba, interference, contact situation, articulators, speech sounds and English as a second language.

INTRODUCTION

According to Ethnologue (2019), English is a member of the Indo-European family of languages. It was brought to Ghana through British colonial conquest. It has remained one of the dominant languages in the linguistic landscape of the country. Per the 2004 White Paper on Ghana's Educational Reform (Article 14, Clause 4) the language policy adopted for Ghana stipulates that Ghanaian languages be used as media of instruction at the lower level of Education when teachers and learning materials in those languages are available (MOE, 2014). The paper recommends that English should be used as a unifier when the use of a Ghanaian language is not possible due to the multiplicity of language backgrounds of the school children. The White Paper also recommends at higher levels of education, that the English language be a subject of study. At the Senior High School level therefore, English is a core subject which comprises Language and Literature. The Language component, of interest to this research, examined by the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) is Oral English (Listening Comprehension Test).

The rationale behind this test is to improve considerably the speaking skills of students so as to give them the confidence to communicate in the language. The White Paper on Education (2004) states categorically that "second cycle institutions should then be able to concentrate on enrichment of communication skills in English."

Dagaare on the other hand, is the language spoken by the Dagaaba in the Upper West Region of Ghana. Bodomo (1997) observes that Dagaare belongs to the Oti-Volta group of the Gur branch of the Niger-Congo language family. Bodomo argues that Dagaare is a two-toned language also referred to as Mabia subgroup of the branch of the Niger-Congo language of West Africa. It is spoken by about two (2) million people, mainly in Ghana but also in neighbouring regions of West Africa, like Burkina Faso and the Ivory Coast. Phonologically speaking, Dagaare and other Mabia languages, including Moore, Dagbane, Frafra, Kusaal, Mampruli and Buli, are marked by a preponderance of consonants and a scarcity of vowel sounds when compared to Indo-European languages, such as English and French. The major towns in the Upper West Region where Dagaare is spoken as an L1 include Wa, Lawra, Jirapa, Namdom, Nadowli, Daffiama, Kaleo and Tuna (Bodomo 1997). It must be stated that the Dagaare spoken in these different towns vary slightly but not in a manner that impairs intelligibility. This study centres on central Dagaare spoken particularly in Jirapa. This is the only variety that has been used widely in publications by the Bureau of Ghana languages and is one of the officially recognized Ghanaian languages being taught in tertiary institutions like University of Ghana (Legon), University College of Education, Winneba and is studied as an elective subject at the Senior High School (SHS) level. Dagaare is used on all the FM radio stations in the Upper West Region and recently, the Catholic Church and the Ghana Bible Society have published New Testament Bibles in it.

It is very easy to identify the poorly informed *Dagao* (singular for someone whose mother tongue is Dagaare) when he/she speaks the English language. The reasons are that Dagaare and English are two different languages with some distinct speech sounds that are distributed differently in the two languages. As a result of this disparity, the acquisition of English as a second language to the *Dagao* comes with a few challenges, especially in the area of pronunciation. The uninformed *Dagao's* acquisition of the English language is achieved through a transfer of Dagaare sounds into the phonology of the English language. This is the phenomenon linguists call "L1 Interference". The assumption in this concept is that learners of a second language face pronunciation difficulties as a result of differences in the phonology of the L1 and the L2. Various hypotheses have been set forth to explain how the L2 learner overcomes the challenges he faces due to the differences he encounters in the phonology of the two languages. Robert (1961) postulates that the L2 learner transfers the pronunciation pattern of his L1 into the unknown sound segment of the L2. This research aims at investigating how Dagaare influences the pronunciation of English sounds and to suggest ways to curb the situation.

The Problem
English is the target language in education in Ghana. The SHS English language Syllabus (2007) requires that the SHS student be proficient in the English language in order to function efficiently in society and in the field of work. The Government White Paper (2004) acknowledges the difficulties involved so far in acquiring particularly the oral skills. Students have difficulty mastering the oral component of the language. Students with Dagaare as their

L1 come to the study of the English language after they have acquired the phonology of Dagaare. When they encounter sounds of the English language that are new to them, they substitute such sounds with what seems to be their closest Dagaare counterparts. The result is the production of unacceptable sounds in the English language. For example English has voiced and voiceless dental fricatives - / ð /, / θ /. Dagaare lacks these sounds. When Dagaaba students come across these sounds, they approximate them to the Dagaare alveolar voiceless stop / t / or voiced stop /d/ respectively. This results in the production of unacceptable sounds in English.

Table 1 Wrong pronunciation of English words by students.

Word	English Pronunciation	Dagaare Pronunciation
thing	/ θɪŋ /	*/ tɪŋ /
thank	/ θæŋk /	*/ tæŋk /
these	/ ðiːz /	*/ diːs /
this	/ θɪs /	*/ dɪs /

Author's Construct (2016).

Dagaare lacks the labio-dental voiced fricative /v/ in final position. When Dagaaba students come across this sound in final position in English words, they approximate it to its voiceless counterpart /f/. The palatal fricatives /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ are absent in Dagaare. Dagaaba students therefore replace these English sounds with the alveolar voiceless fricative /s/. For example:
Table 2 below shows additional words that are often wrongly pronounced by Dagaare students.

Table 2. Other words wrongly pronounced by students

Word	English Pronunciation	Dagaare Pronunciation
leave	/ liːv /	*/ liːf /
prove	/ pruːv /	*/ pruːf /
station	/ steiʃən /	*/ steisən /
vision	/ vɪʒən /	*/ vɪsən /

Author's construct (2016)
There are times when Dagaaba students transfer whole structures from Dagaare into English. For example, the authors have come across in the scripts of some of their Dagaaba students structures such as *"Our two days". In Dagaare, this is an acceptable way of greeting. In Dagaare, one would say {Te beri ayi}. In English, one would say "It's been a while since we last met". A student was quizzed as to why he failed to attend a class and his reply was: *"I went to my brother house". In this construction, the Dagaaba student failed to use the genitive case of the noun brother; which is "brother's". This is a case of L1 interference because Dagaare syntax does not have the genitive marker. Dagaare has the following acceptable noun compounds where the first noun is possessive without any marker. E.g:

	Def.	man	house	Spec.
Dagaare:	*"A*	*dɔ:*	*die*	*la."*
English;	"The	man	house	it is." (a direct transliteration)

Proper English rendition: "It is the man's house."

These examples indicate that there are instances of negative L1 influence in the acquisition of English. Marking the end of term examination scripts of my SHS one students, a student wrote the following:

"How I you?"

The student used the personal pronoun 'I' in place of the verb 'are'. Such an error stems from the student's failure to distinguish between the simple English long vowel /a:/ and the diphthong /aɪ/. This implies that either the English teacher at the JHS level failed to make the distinction between /ə:/ and /ai/ clearly to the pupil or the pupil wrongly perceives the two sounds as the same. This research found out that the latter is the case because many students perceive two distinct sounds as the same. This wrong perception persists because some teachers do not recognize why their students make the errors (Marlin, 2013). This project seeks to establish that Dagaare as an L1, influences the way the Dagaaba students learn English.

Objectives of the study

The study aims at highlighting the major influence of Dagaare on English as a second language. To this end, the research seeks to:

i.   find out the nature of the influence of Dagaare on spoken English

ii.   find out the similarities and differences between the phonology of Dagaare and English

iii.   find out the impact of the phonological similarities and differences of Dagaare on spoken English

iv.   find out the most suitable method for teaching Oral English at the Senior High School level.

To achieve these objectives we propose to use the case study design; but first, a look at what available literature says about the phenomenon generally.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A lot of literature on L1 interference is available especially online but the research found no published work particularly on the interference of Dagaare on spoken English. The paucity of literature on the interference of Dagaare on spoken English underscores the significance of this study as it will contribute significantly to knowledge. As existing literature on language interference in general is reviewed, findings would be discussed under the following sub-headings: definition of concepts on language interference, reasons for the interference, nature of the influence of Dagaare on Oral English, similarities and differences between the phonology of Dagaare and English, the impact of the differences in the sound systems of Dagaare on English and suitable teaching methods for oral English.

Definition of concepts of language interference

Dulay (1982) quoted by Marlin (2013) defines interference as the automatic transfer, due to habit, of the surface structure of the first language onto the surface structure of the target language. He adds that interference is 'errors in the learners' use of the foreign language that can be traced back to the mother tongue'. Ellis (1986) refers to interference as 'transfer', which he says is 'the influence that the learner's L1 exerts over the acquisition of an L2.Marlin (2013) says that when language transfer has negative impact on the target language, it is called interference. Language interference therefore is when a person's understanding of one language has an impact on his/her understanding of another language. He explains that interference occurs due to differences in the two languages and poor mastery by the learner of the second language.

Reasons for interference

Marlin (2013) cites several reasons for the phenomenon of language transfer or interference. He states first of all the bilingual's background. He explains further that because the learner is exposed to two languages, he is influenced by both the source and target languages. He cites the example of an Indonesian student who is studying Bahasa who 'tends to put his Javanese language into Indonesia'.

Marlin again cites disloyalty to target language as another cause of interference. He cites the case where people use the basic structure of their L1 in Facebook constructions. As they use the target language they do not keep faith with its structures but rather embed it in the structure of the L1. This is not an error since the user is aware of what he/she is doing. This then is not the case with Dagaare and English.

In a third example, Marlin opines that the limited mastery of the vocabulary of the target language (TL) leads to interference. The more vocabulary of the TL that the learner knows, the less interference occurs. The fewer the vocabulary of the TL that the learner knows the greater the interference as the learner uses L1 words in structures when he cannot readily remember an L2 word.

Another reason Marlin cites as accounting for interference is need for synonym. He is of the opinion that when synonyms in the TL are not that easily available, the learner uses the L1 equivalent. This phenomenon leads to borrowing of vocabulary from source language (SL) to target language (TL). Marlin again cites prestige and style as another reason for transfer. He explains that most speakers may know the appropriate words in the TL but if the SL has better prestige than the TL they stick to the vocabulary of the L1.This is applicable in the case of Dagaare and English. Among the educated Dagaaba, English is a more prestigious language than Dagaare. In speech therefore, when Dagaare words are either limited or non-existent, they tend to use English words to cater for the non-availability thereby enhancing their prestige. A clear example is the non-availability of 'coffin' in Dagaare. An educated Dagao may say: *"Ka n te da a coffin waa na ning."* This means: "I will buy the coffin and return with it."

He concludes that the greater the differences in the two languages, the greater the interference. He ends with the suggestion that the teacher of the target language ought to know the similarities and differences of both languages so that he/she can decide which strategy, methodology and the appropriate teaching and learning materials to use in teaching the second language. This agrees with what this study set out to achieve: To clearly set out the similarities

and differences between English and Dagaare with the aim that the teacher will adopt the most suitable method in teaching English at the Senior High School level.

Owu-Ewie (2000), argues that L1 interference is one of the many sources of errors learners make in the process of second language acquisition. He states that the interference occurs because the learner presupposes that some features of his language are universal. As a result, they impose such features on their target language. He concludes that whether the interference becomes facilitatory or inhibitory depends on the teacher's knowledge of the error and how he treats the interference.

The nature of the influence of Dagaare on English
This subsection delves into the nature of the influence of Dagaare on English. It examines the various forms Dagaare influence on English takes. This subsection is discussed under the following headings: vocabulary coinages, error in bilingualism, mother tongue influence and blind spots.

Vocabulary Coinages
English and Dagaare are in a language contact situation (Adika, 2012). As would be expected these languages are bound to impinge on each other. The Dagaaba come into contact with English in school circles after they have mastered Dagaare. In the process of learning English therefore as a second language, the Dagaaba adapt portions of the English language and make them fit into the Dagaare language system. This process, according to Adika, (2012), is called 'nativization'; where a language assumes vocabulary items that develop towards a locally acceptable standard. This is somewhat different from the generally known concept of nativization where a second language becomes the first language of a group of people in a foreign land (O'Grady W. & Dobrovolsky M. 1992).

As a result, English among the Dagaaba assumes new forms to enable the Dagaaba use it to express Dagaare concepts. This process however does little damage to the second language. According to O'Grady and Dobrovolsky (1992), vocabulary coinages take the form where concepts that are alien to a second language are expressed in the vocabulary of the second. For example, the expressions 'chop bar', 'bush meat', and 'chop money', are Ghanaian concepts that refer to a mini restaurant, game and house-keeping money respectively. They add that expressing Ghanaian concepts using English words 'nativizes' the English language and widens its functions. For example, among the Dagaaba, burying the dead in a coffin is a new practice. The word coffin therefore does not exist in the Dagaare vocabulary. The Dagaaba then coin /kuŋ daga/; 'death box' to reflect the idea of burying in a coffin. This research investigated and confirms the truth in these processes in the research community.

It is worth mentioning that the contact between English and Dagaare has also resulted in a situation where English vocabulary have 'swallowed' Dagaare words due to their regular use over the Dagaare words. Ansung (2014 unpublished thesis) refers to this process as "Englishization". It is the opposite of nativization. Many Dagaare words within this category have long been forgotten. Many Dagaaba youth do not know the Dagaare words for items such as pipe and lamp. The English versions have been used for so long that the Dagaare versions, {taolaa} and {fintena} respectively, have been forgotten. This study however deals with the influence of Dagaare on English, a form of nativization.

Error in bilingualism

Yule (1985) refers to a language error as a breach in the application of the rules of a language. Brown (1994), defines linguistic errors as "a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the inter-language competence of the learner." It is important to distinguish errors from mistakes. An error is defined as resulting from a learner's lack of proper grammatical knowledge, whilst a mistake is a failure to utilize a known system correctly. Brown (1994) terms these mistakes as performance errors. Mistakes of this kind are frequently made by both native speakers and second language learners. However, native speakers are generally able to correct themselves quickly. Such mistakes include slips of the tongue and random ungrammatical formations. On the other hand, errors are systematic in that they occur repeatedly and are not recognizable by the learner. They are a part of the learner's inter-language, and the learner does not generally consider them as errors. They are *errors* only from the perspective of teachers and others who are aware that the learner has deviated from a grammatical norm. That is, mistakes can be self-corrected with or without being pointed out to the speaker but errors cannot be self-corrected. The study wishes to give examples to agree with the above claims. For example, Dagaare students sometimes say:

"/Wi *həf fu:d at həum/." That is "We have food at home." They wrongly pronounce the auxiliary verb /həv/ as */həf/. This is an error because the Dagaaba students do not know that /v/ can occur in final position in English unlike in Dagaare.

Mother tongue interference

According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (2010), L1 interference is also known as first Language transfer, linguistic interference, and cross linguistic influence. It refers to speakers or writers applying knowledge from one language to another language. It is the transfer of linguistic features between languages in the speech repertoire of bilingual or multilingual individuals. For the purpose of this study, the L1 is Dagaare. English language then is the L2. English is the target language of students. Teachers of English have realized over the years that the phenomenon of L1 interference is real and has an impact on the learning of students who seek to be proficient in English.

Duley & Dobrovolsky (1982), define L1 interference as "the automatic transfer due to habit of the surface structure of the first language onto the surface structure of the target language. " By this, they mean that speakers of the L1 transfer their knowledge of the linguistic features of their native language unto the second language or target language as they communicate concepts to others.

O'Grady (1992) agrees with Duley & Dobrovolsky (1982), that L1 interference is the transfer of "...some structure from the native language ...to the second language." They further describe the errors that result in the process of the transfer as inter-lingual errors caused by L1 interference.

Robert (1961) also supports the above definitions as he says that L1 interference is an unconscious transfer of the "entire sound system of one's native language to the foreign language, both for speaking and for listening". This review has found out that linguists have propounded several theories to account for this phenomenon. A theory is an idea or set of ideas that explains observed facts or phenomena. The *On-line Business Dictionary* says theories are

a set of assumptions, propositions, or accepted facts that attempt to provide a plausible or rational explanation of cause-and-effect (causal) relationships among a group of observed phenomenon. Theories on L1 interference are a set of ideas that several linguists have put forward to explain how L1 interference occurs, and why it does.

This Positive view of L1 interference (CUP).

This positive view of L1 interference is represented by the theory of Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP). This theory proposes a 'dual iceberg' analogy to describe the transfer of bilingual learners' first language to the second. When the relevant unit or structure of both languages is the same, linguistic interference can result in correct language production called positive transfer: here, the "correct" meaning is in line with most native speakers' notions of acceptability. The results of positive transfer go largely unnoticed and so are less often discussed. Nonetheless, such cases exist. Generally speaking, the more similar the two languages are and the more the learner is aware of the relation between them, the more positive transfer will occur.

The Negative view of L1 interference

The Negative view of L1 interference with L2 acquisition is represented by two theories namely: Contrastive Analysis (CA) and Contrastive Rhetoric (CR). These theories posit that L1 hinders the smooth acquisition of L2 when both languages show differences. Language interference is most often discussed as a source of errors known as negative transfer, which occurs when speakers and writers transfer items and structures that are not the same in both languages. Within the theory of contrastive analysis, the systematic study of a pair of languages with a view to identifying their structural differences, the greater the differences between the two languages, the more negative transfer can be expected. This means therefore that when structural differences exist in the two languages, L1 interferes with the smooth acquisition of the second language.

This study found out that instances of both positive and negative transfer from Dagaare onto English exists. This research proffers suggestions as to how such cases of negative transfer can be overcome through the application of appropriate pedagogy. As the attention of teachers is drawn to these negative interferences, it will pave the way for them to help their learners overcome these learning difficulties to become proficient in English.

Blind spots

Yule (1985), explains that blind spots refer to the situation where second language speakers perceive wrongly the English sounds they hear caused by difficulties in distinguishing sounds. Daluo (Owu-Ewie, 2000) agrees with Yule that this difficulty emanates from the fact that some sounds in the second language appear to be similar to other sounds in the native language of the learner, and L2 learners tend to apply these sounds where they should not. This research cite examples among Dagaare speakers of English to support this claim. For example the English sounds /ó/ and /θ/ which are voiceless and voiced dental fricatives respectively are absent in Dagaare. When English words with these sounds are pronounced to Dagaare students, they perceive them as though they were the alveolar voiced and voiceless stops /t/ and /d/. As a result, instead of producing the correct English sounds in words such as: "three", "thief", "with", and "them" as /θri:/,/θi:f/, /wɪθ/ and /δəm/ respectively. They rather pronounce these words as: */tri:/. */ti:f/, */wɪf/, and */dəm/. In addition, some sounds in the English language

are perceived to be the same by the learner. They result in wrong pronunciation of some English words. For example the /g/ sound in English is perceived wrongly by Dagaare students to be the same as /ʤ/. As such the word 'gear' and the name 'Gertrude' which should be pronounced as /giə/ and /getrud/ respectively are rather wrongly pronounced as /ʤiə/ and /ʤetru/. For example /ŋ/ is wrongly perceived as /g/ by learners in word final position. This results in the wrong pronunciation of some English words such as: /kɪŋ/ as */kɪŋg/, /sɪŋ/as */sɪŋg/ and /wɪŋ/as */wɪŋg/. As indicated earlier, a student writes *'How I /aɪ/ you?' instead of 'How are /a:/ you?' The reason is the wrong perception of the two underlined vowel sounds as the same.

The similarities and differences between the phonology of Dagaare and English
This subsection deals with the similarities and differences between the phonology of Dagaare and English.

The classification of the consonants of English
According to Yule (1985), articulatory phonetics is the description of how speech sounds are made. Sackeyfio (1991), says English has twenty four (24) consonant phonemes and twenty (20) vowel phonemes. English consonants are classified into stops (plosives), affricates, fricatives, nasals, liquids and approximants.

Table 3 Classification of English consonants.

| MANNER OF ARTICULATION		PLACE OF ARTICULATION						
		Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Alveolar Palatal	velar	Glotal
Stops		p b			t d		k g	
Fricatives			f v	θ δ	s z	ʃ ʒ		h
Affricates						ʧ ʤ		
Nasals		m			n		ŋ	
Liquids					l		r	
Approximant		w				y		

Adopted from Yule (1985)
The syllable structure of English permits a wide range of difference in the distribution of these consonants. The English syllable structure also regulates the type of consonant clusters that are permissible. For example, the velar nasal /ŋ/ never occurs in syllable initial. The glides: /w/, /y/, and /h/ never occur in syllable final position. In Dagaare however, the velar nasal occurs in consonant initial. A Dagao transcribes "ink" as */ŋk/ instead of /ɪŋk/. This is a result of his knowledge that Dagaare has /ŋ/in initial position as in /ŋba baŋ/ meaning "I do not know". We see clearly that apart from sound differences, differences in place of occurrence also pose pronunciation challenges for Dagaare learners of English.

The distribution of vowels of English
English vowels are classified differently from consonants according to position in the mouth (front or back), tongue height (high or low) and lip rounding. According to Korangteng (2012), there are five vowel characters in the English alphabet: (a, e, ɪ, o, u). These are represented variously in twelve pure vowels, eight diphthongs and three triphthongs. Korangteng lists the

pure vowels and diphthongs as follows: (iː, ɪ, ɛ, æ, ɑː, ɒ, ɔː, ʊ, uː, ʌ, ɜː, ə), (eɪ, ə ʊ, aɪ, ɑʊ, ɔɪ, ɪə, eə, uə).

Figure 1. Diagram on the pure vowels of English.

Adopted from Korangteng, 2012
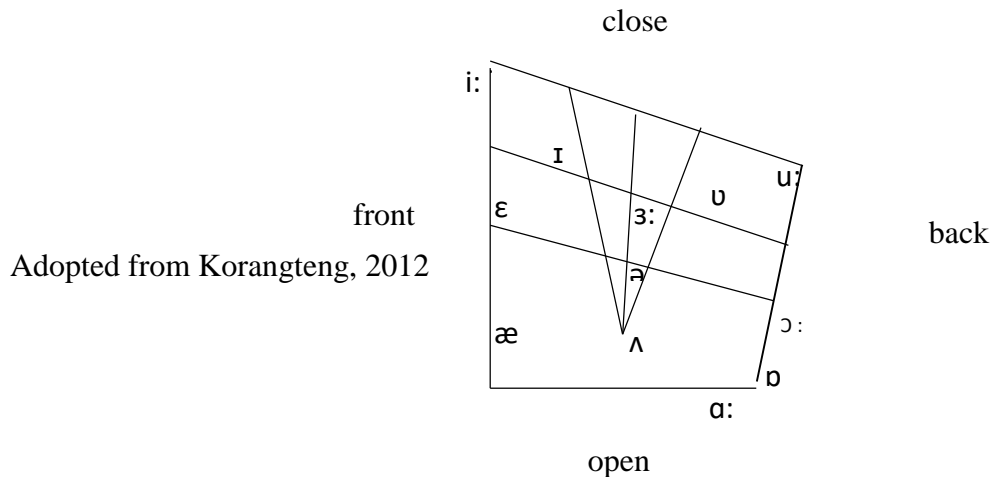
Classification of the consonants of Dagaare
According to Bodomo (1997), Dagaare has twenty-five (25) consonant and two (2) glides. They are distributed as follows:

Table 4 Consonants and Glides in Dagaare.

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Alveo/Palatal	Palatal	velar	Labio-Velar	Glotal
Stops	p b		t d			k g		ʔ
Fricatives		f v	s z					h
Affricates				ky gy			kp gb	
Nasals	m		n		ɲ	ŋ	ŋm	
Liquids			l			r		
Glides				y			w	
Implosive								ɦ ʻl

Adapted from Bodomo (1997)

The distribution of vowels of Dagaare
Bodomo (1997), Dagaare has nine (9) vowel phonemes. They are classified as follows: **a, e, i, o, u, ɔ, ɛ, ó, ɪ.** Bodomo says Dagaare vowels are distributed on the vowel chart along the lines of +/- ATR (Advanced Tongue Root). Their various positions are on the vowel chart along the lines of height and roundness of the lips. While some are front vowels, others are back vowels. Some front vowels are high, others are low, and some back vowels are high as others are low.

Figure 2. Diagram on the pure vowels of Dagaare.
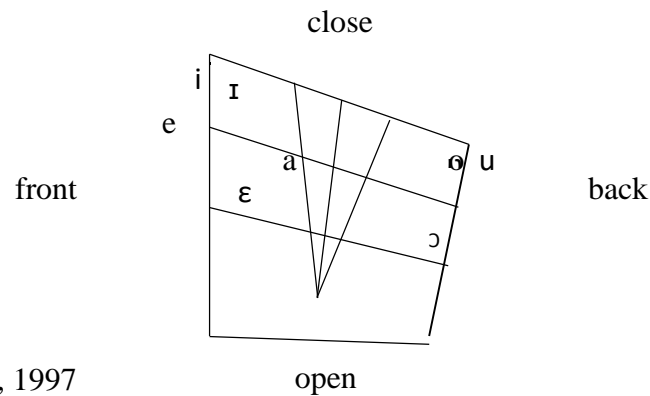
Adopted from Bodomo, 1997

Differences in the phonology of Dagaare and English
In spite of the similarities in the speech sounds of Dagaare and English, the two languages have very clear different speech sounds. Some sounds in English are evidently absent in Dagaare. For example, according to Bodomo (1997), the following English consonants phonemes are not in Dagaare: /ʃ/, / ʒ/, / θ /, /ð/. On the other hand, the following consonant phonemes in Dagaare are absent in English: /kp/, /gb/, /ɲ/, /ŋm/, /ʔ/, /ɦ/, /'l/. With regard to the vowels of the two languages, Bodomo shows that all the nine (9) vowels of Dagaare are in English. However, two (2) English vowels are absent in Dagaare. They are the central vowel /ʌ / and the schwa vowel   /ə /.

The impact of the differences in the Dagaare phonology on English
In view of the differences that exist between the phonology of English and Dagaare, some pronunciation difficulties rear their ugly heads in the speech of Dagaare learners of the English language. English has /v/ in both initial and final position of words, as in '**v**illage' and 'lea**v**e'. Dagaare however has /v/ only in initial position as in 'vɔl' – 'swallow'. The result is that most Dagaare students have difficulty pronouncing words that have /v/ in final position. They substitute it with its voiceless counterpart /f/ thereby resulting in pronunciation errors. Examples include the following:

Table 5. The absence of / v / in final position in Dagaare words

Word	English Pronunciation	Dagaare Pronunciation
Leave	/ li:v /	/ li:f /
Sleeve	/ sli:v /	/ sli:f /

Author's construct
English has /z/ in both initial and final position as in 'zoo' and 'prize'. Dagaare however has /z/ only in initial position as in {zɪŋ} – blood. When the Dagaare student comes across English words with /z/ in final position, they substitute it for its voiceless counterpart /s/. The result is that some English words with the /z/ in final position are pronounced with the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/. Examples include the following:

Table 6. The absence of / s / in final position in Dagaare words

Word	English Pronunciation	Dagaare Pronunciation
Lose	/lu:z/	*/lu:s/
Dogs	/dɔgz/	*/dɔgs/

As indicated earlier under blind spots (2.3.4), the English sounds /ó/ and /θ/ which are voiced and voiceless dental fricatives are absent in Dagaare. When English words with these sounds are pronounced to Dagaare students, they perceive them as though they were the alveolar voiced or voiceless stops /t/ and /d/. As a result, instead of producing the correct English sounds in words such as: "three", "thief", "with", and "them" as /θri:/, /θi:f/, /wɪθ/ and /ðəm/ respectively. They rather pronounce these words as: */tri:/. */ti:f/, */wɪf/, and */dəm/.

As indicated above, Dagaare has a number of consonant clusters that are absent in English. English does not have these clusters and as such they do not interfere with the Dagaare students learning of the English language.

In view of the absence of the English vowels / ʌ / and / ə / in Dagaare, a few pronunciation difficulties arise in the speech of Dagaare students. Examples include the following:

Table 7. The absence of / ʌ / and / ə / in Dagaare

Word	English Pronunciation	Dagaare Pronunciation
But	/ bʌt /	*/ bɛt /
Discussion	/ dɪ'skʌʃən /	*/ di'skɛsin /
Teacher	/ ti:ʧə /	*/ ti:ʧæ /
Ago	/ əgəʊ /	*/ ægo: /
Month	/ mʌnθ /	*/ mɛnf /

Author's construct

The tonal system of Dagaare
Bodomo (1997) explains that pitch relates to the rate at which the vocal cords vibrate. The faster they vibrate, the higher the pitch. The function of pitch divides the world's languages into two major groups – tone and intonation languages. Bodomo quotes Pike (1948; 3) who defines tone languages as "languages having lexically significant, contrastive, but related pitch on each syllable." Dagaare belongs to this group of languages as indicated earlier.

Intonation languages on the other hand, Bodomo continues, are those in which pitch relates to entire sentences rather than with syllables and words. In such languages, pitch operates syntactically, leading to change in meaning depending on the type of pitch used. English language belongs to this group of intonation languages. Therefore, Dagaare and English differ from each other in relation to how pitch operates in each of them.

Being a tone language, Bodomo states that Dagaare has register tones, tonal polarity, contour tones and perturbations. Tone in Dagaare functions in two ways – lexically and grammatically. At the lexical level, some words in Dagaare have the same segmental composition but differ in tonal structure. This difference brings about lexical semantic difference. For example,

Table 8. Semantic differences due to tone

Word with tone diacritic	Meaning	Word with tone diacritic	Meaning
/ tú /	to dig	/ tù /	to follow
/ nɔ´ŋ /	to massage	/ nɔ`ŋ /	to love

At the grammatical level, some Dagaare words that have similar segmental composition show different grammatical meanings when different pitch is applied on them. For example:

Table 9. Grammatical differences due to tone

Dagaare	Meaning
O wá wạ̀.	He/she has not come
O kừŋ g*áá*	He/she will not go.
O kúŋ g*áá*	He/she should not have gone

Significant for this study is the revelation that tone in Dagaare can operate on both syllables of a word that has primary and secondary syllables. For example:

Table 10. Different tones operating in one word in Dagaare with several syllables

Tone type	Dagaare Word	Meaning
High - High	/ bɪ́é /	child
High - Low	/ gb ɛ́ ɛ̀ /	legs
Low - High	/ bạ̀ạ̀lá /	sick person
Low - Low	/ sạ̀ạ̀ /	father
High – Downstep high	/ sáá!ạ̀	stranger

Equipped with this knowledge but unaware of the fact that English is not a tone language, the uninformed Dagao transfers this knowledge onto his pronunciation of some English words that need no tone at all. For example:
/ ðɪ́ə / is a meeting today.
There is a meeting today.
/ hɪ́ə / is the man.
Here is the man.
* *I am / hɪ́ə / to / siə: / you*
I am here to see you.
In view of the above L1 interference in the learning of English in Dagaare communities, it is necessary that the teachers of English take cognizance of the reality of the phenomenon in order to help Dagaare students pick up language competencies in the English language.
Teachers of the English language in such communities must apply the most suitable teaching methods in the classroom so as to teach the English language effectively.

Suitable teaching methods for Oral English
According to Evelyn (2011), there are several teaching methods. She mentions eight of them as follows: the Grammar Translation Method, the Direct Method, Audio-lingual method, George Lozanov's Suggestopedia, Total Physical Response, the Silent Way, Community language learning, and the Communicative language teaching.

Teaching Methods Reviewed
Andrew (2015) classifies all the teaching methods under three broad categories: Transmission, transaction and transformation.

Transmission teaching method
He explains that with the transmission teaching method (comprising the Grammar Translation Method) knowledge is passed on from the teacher to the leaner. This makes it teacher-centred.

Transactional teaching method
The Transactional mode of teaching according to Andrew comprises the Direct Method, George Lozanov's Suggestopedia, Total Physical Response, The Silent Way and Community Language Learning Method. The Transactional mode of teaching allows learners to interact with learning material and finally enabling learners to construct their own knowledge and experiences.

The transformation teaching method
The Transformational which comprises the Audio-lingual method and Community Language Learning method creates conditions that have the potential to transform the learner totally (Holistic Education). Andrew concludes that learning can take place using all three views or approaches. "However," he says, "it is my observation that the most powerful and sustaining learning experiences are created when transactional and transformational approaches are used predominately."

Harrison (1973) agrees with Andrew (2015) that the most effective method of teaching is the transformational method. He outlines a number of conditions necessary for transformational language teaching to take place. They are as follows: First of all, Harrison states that the learner must be made aware that the L2 is a language with its own unique phonology that must be mastered appropriately to ensure intelligibility. He adds that the learner's failure to grasp this truth often results unwittingly in a poor mastery of the phonology of the L2. Secondly, he contends that pronunciation must be taught in a context of genuine language use. He explains that this must be so because learners understand continuous speech not because of their knowledge of the correct pronunciation of individual words but because of their ability to understand vocabulary, grammar and contextual meaning. Thirdly, Harrison indicates that the language teacher must be thoroughly equipped with the requisite knowledge of the phonology and phonetics of both the native language and the target language.

Davis (2009) suggests that the design and selection of teaching methods must take into account not only the nature of the subject matter but also how students learn. He concludes that for effective learning and mastery of oral skills, the teacher centred approach be used at all times. So far as this study is concerned, this researcher is of the opinion that the English language teacher in the Dagaare community should use all the three approaches to teach Oral English.

He must indeed master the phonology and phonetics of both languages. This will enable him identify areas of interference, understand the cause of students' errors and be in a position to remedy such errors. Such a teacher therefore must master the phonemes of both languages as well and understand the operation of supra segmental features of both languages.

Data collection

As a descriptive case study, both quantitative and qualitative approaches to the data collection were adopted. The data was collected through the use of such instruments as questionnaires and interview guides. A questionnaire is a research instrument which consists of series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information (Edu-Buondoh, 2013). A questionnaire normally has a standardized set of questions; that is questions whose reliability and validity are tested. The questionnaires were designed to afford the respondents the chance to give information necessary for this research. The questionnaires were very useful in getting vital information from the respondents within the stipulated time. The questionnaires incorporated a lot of open-ended questions for the respondent to give their personal views on the research topic. I assured the student respondents of their confidentiality.

The study also used interviews guides to gather information from the respondents. According to Adentwi K. and Amartei A. (2010), a research interview is an interchange of ideas between two or more people. The interview instrument was neither entirely subjective nor objective. Respondents related the concepts to their peculiar understanding. The teachers in particular gave out information to the researcher as the atmosphere was relaxed enough to reflect an interaction between colleagues. Through observation, the researcher also took note of some expressions considered to be cases of L1 interference that students used among themselves and in their interaction with the researcher as their teacher.

Limitations

This study has a number of limitations. The researcher was constrained by time. The study was therefore restricted to two schools - T. I. AMASS and Jirapa Senior High School. The latter school was where the study was piloted. Sufficient time would have enabled the researcher to cover several schools to make the findings more representative of the views of all students who have Dagaare as their mother tongue. The nonexistence of books and other published works on the subject of Dagaare interference on spoken English compelled the researcher to draw most of his references from online sources and primary data. The study also does not cover all the aspects of English such as grammar that are equally affected by L1 influence.

RESULTS

The study provides varied information retrieved from the 240 questionnaires the researcher administered. This section contains results and discussions using charts and tables for purposes of pictorial illustrations. As a result, the responses from the respondents are grouped according to the four (4) research concerns that guided the collection of data.

Analysis and discussion of responses
**Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents**
The ages of student respondents ranged from 18 to 28 years. The student-respondents were all carefully selected from the Jirapa district in the Upper West Region where central Dagaare is spoken. The ages of the teacher-respondents ranged between 35 to 48 years. These were carefully selected form the total teacher population of the school on the common grounds that they are the language teachers in the school.

Nature of Dagaare Interference
Direct translation
The graph below shows the percentage of Dagaaba students who transpose Dagaare concepts literally into English.

Figure 3.
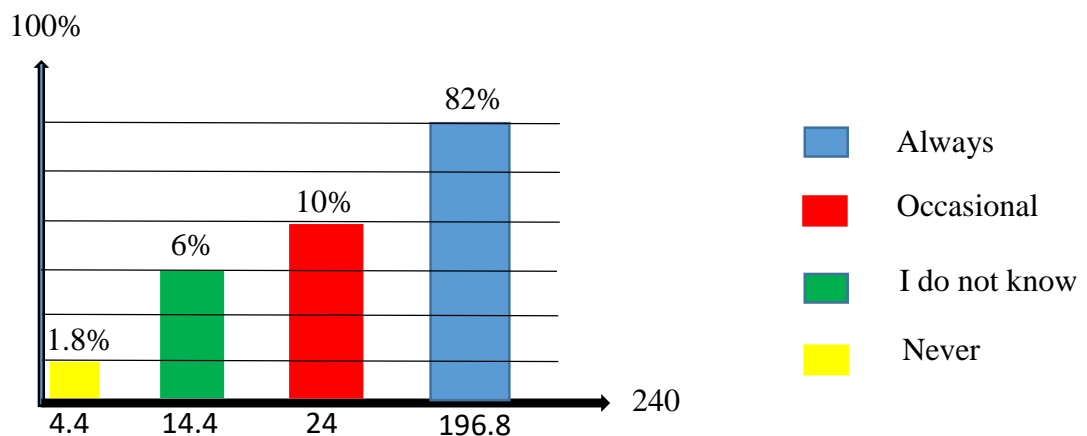
From the above graph, out of the 240 respondents, 196.8 representing 82% always use Dagaare concepts directly in English. 24 of them representing 10% occasionally transpose Dagaare concepts directly into English. Out of the number, 14.4 representing 6% claim they do not know whether they engage in the use of Dagaare concepts directly in English when they seek to express themselves. 4.4 of the respondents claim they never directly use Dagaare concepts in English without modifications. From the above, the number that are affected by L1 interference is huge. The questionnaires sought to find out how regular respondents translated directly the following Dagaare expressions into English. Find the table below represented by the graph above:

Table 11. Literal translation of Dagaare concepts into English

Dagaare Concept	Standard English Expression	Literal Translation into English	Percentage of Direct Translation
Ka n diɛfo	May I help you	Let me save you	
Ti bɛri ayi?	It's been a while since we last met	Our two days	
A kaaŋ gurieŋ	The oil has coagulated	The oil is sleeping	82%
N ariba wɪɛ la nɪ.	This is my uncle's farm	This is my uncle farm	
A dao die a libie zaa	The man has spent all the money	The man has eaten all the money	

Speech sound differences

The following table shows that the wrong pronunciation of some English words is as a result of the differences of vowel and consonant speech sounds in Dagaare and English.

Table 12. Wrong pronunciation of English words due to sound differences

Word	Responses		Frequency	%	RP
Through	**a.**	**/tru:/**	**185**	**77**	**/θru:/**
	b.	**/θru:/**	**55**	**23**	
	Total		**240**	**100**	
Leave	**a.**	**/li:f/**	**229**	**92**	**/i:v/**
	b.	**/i:v/**	**11**	**8**	
	Total		**240**	**100**	
Recreation	a.	/rekrieɪsən/	220	91.6	/rekrieɪʃən/
	b.	/rekrieɪʃən/	20	7.4	
	Total		240	100	
Assume	a.	/aʒu:m/	234	97.5	/əsju:m/
	b.	/əsju:m/	6	2.5	
	Total		240	100	
King	a.	/kɪŋg/	236	98.3	/kɪŋ/
	b.	/kɪŋ/	4	1.7	
	Total		240	100	

From the table above, 185 representing 77% are unable to pronounce the English word "through" due to consonant sound differences. The absence of the English dental fricative / **θ** / in Dagaare is the reason for the use of the Dagaare / **t** / in its place. 229 representing 92% of respondents are unable to pronounce correctly the word 'leave'. They pronounce it as */ **li:f** /. This is because the voiced labio-dental fricative / **v** / does not occur in final position in Dagaare. Out of the total of 240 respondents, 220 of them representing 91.6 substitute the alveolar palatal fricative / ʃ / in the word 'recreation' with the voiceless alveolar fricative / **s** / due to the absence of the former in the speech sounds of Dagaare. The palatalized / s / as in 'assume' / **əsju:m** / is not in Dagaare so 234 respondents representing 97.5% substitute it with the voiced alveolar palatal fricative / **ʒ** / thereby wrongly pronouncing 'assume' as / **aʒu:m** /. 236 respondents representing 98.3 pronounce 'king' as */ **kɪŋg** /. This is because the voiced velar nasal / **ŋ** / only occurs in initial position in Dagaare. Per the data collected, the percentage of wrong pronunciation due to differences in speech sounds in English and Dagaare is huge.

**Why respondents pronounce English words wrongly.**

In the interview session, respondents gave reasons why they pronounce English words the way they do. The graph below illustrates this.

Figure 4.
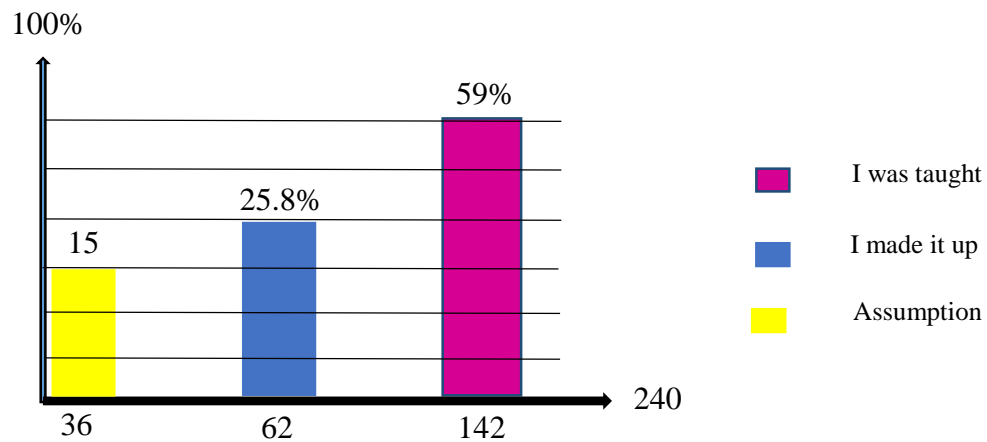
From the responses, 142 respondents representing 59% claim they pronounce the selected words that way because that is the way they were taught. 36 and 62 respondents representing 15% and 25.8 respectively claim they made up the sounds by themselves and that they assume those words sound the way they produce them.

How respondents intend to improve upon the English pronunciation
The graph below illustrates how respondents think they can improve upon their knowledge and pronunciation of English sounds.
Figure 5.
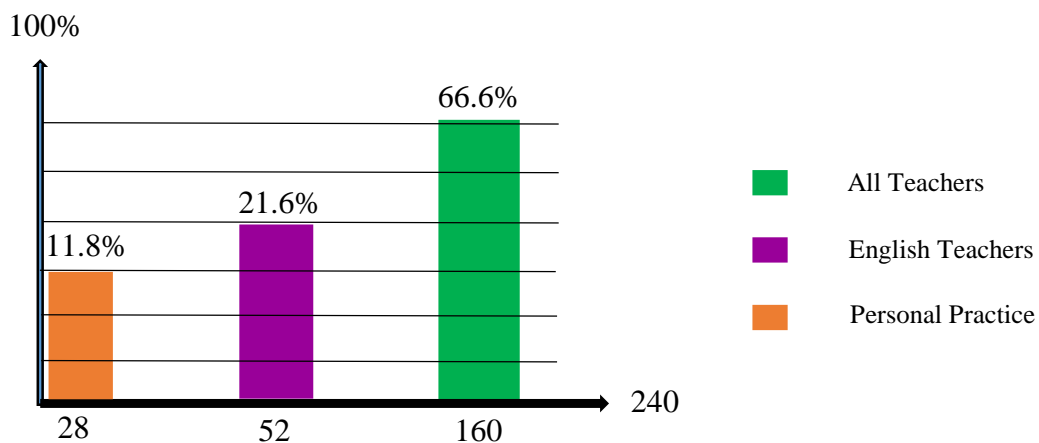
From the graph above, the researcher discovered that out of the total of 240 respondents, 160 representing 66.6% of them think, and wrongly so that all teachers can teach them the correct pronunciation of English sounds. The implication is that if the trend is not corrected, the phenomenon of the influence of Dagaare on spoken English will persist in the study area. 52 of the respondents know that the right people from whom they should learn the correct sounds of English are their English teachers. 28 representing 11.8% of the respondents think they can learn the sounds of English independently.

Responses from language teachers
The table below shows the responses from the language teachers regarding their knowledge of the interference of Dagaare in the spoken English of their Dagaaba students.

Table 13. Direct Translation from Dagaare Expression into English

Standard English Expression	Direct Translation from Dagaare Expression	Dagaare Expression	Percentage
The salt is not sufficient	The salt does not hear	A nyaaruŋ ba wonŋ	83%
I'm very hungry	Hunger is entering me	Konŋ kpɪɛri manŋ	
They are gossiping about me	They are stealing my back	Ba zuuro la ŋ puori	
Fire burnt the house	Fire has eaten the house	A bunŋ di la a diɛ	
Park the car under the shade	Park the car in the cold	Dɪ a lɔɔri binŋ a maaruŋ puonŋ	

The analysis of the responses from the teachers as illustrated on the table above shows that 200 representing 83% of the sampled population are influenced by Dagaare in the way they produce English sounds. This shows a preponderance of the phenomenon in the study area.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the results obtained through the study, there is evidence that majority of Dagaaba SHS students are influenced by their L1 in the way in which they perceive and produce English sounds Analysis from the questionnaires of student respondents shows that 82% of the sampled population translate Dagaare concepts directly into English. This ties in closely with the results from the teacher respondents which shows that 83% of the sampled population are influenced by Dagaare in the way in which they pronounce English sounds. From the results of the study, the researcher draws the following specific conclusions.

• That there is a preponderance of the phenomenon of Dagaare influence on the spoken English of SHS students in the study area.

• That Dagaaba SHS students pronounce English sounds wrongly because of their lack of knowledge of the phonological differences in Dagaare and English.

• That 78.4% representing a colossal figure of 188 of the total sampled population do not know that their English teachers are the only teachers from whom they should learn the sounds of English. The implication is that majority of SHS learners in the study area might not take their English teachers seriously when it comes to the pronunciation of English sounds.

• From the responses, 142 respondents representing 59% claim they pronounce the selected words that way because that is the way they were taught. This is far from the truth because the selected teachers in the study area are all first degree holders whose knowledge of their subject matter is unquestionable. It stands to reason that the students were taught the proper sounds of English just that they (the students)

• failed to grasp the concept due to their assumption that the sounds of Dagaare and English are the same.

In view of the findings discussed above and the urgent need to minimize if not completely eradicate the interference of Dagaare on oral English, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

• All English teachers in predominant Dagaare communities should be conversant with the phonology of English and Dagaare. This will enable the teachers make a clear distinction between the speech sounds of both languages and thereby adequately teach the students at the SHS level.
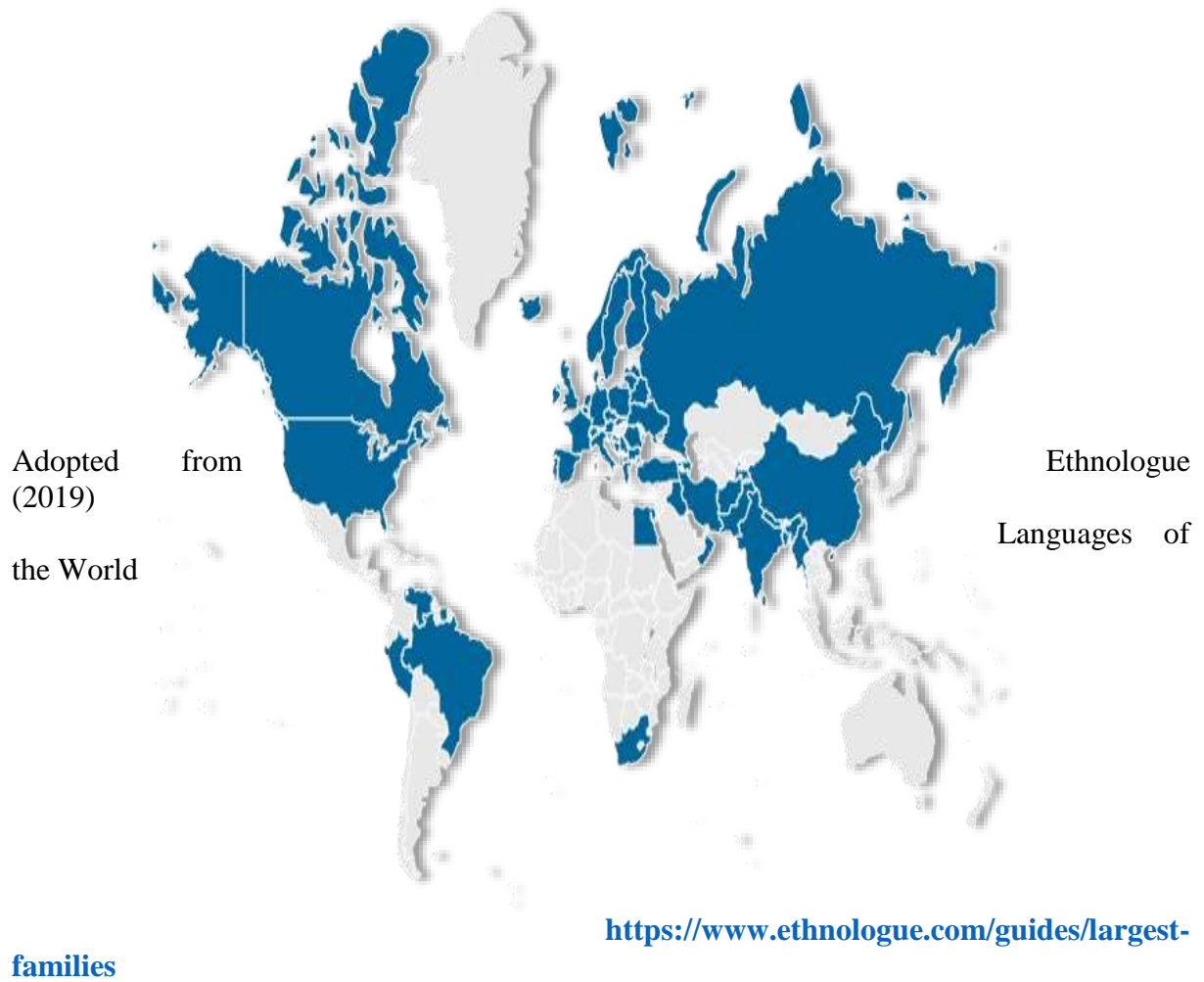
- English language teachers of Dagaare students should make their students aware of the reality of the phenomenon of L1 interference. The Dagaare students should be taught the differences in the phonology of both languages. English Teachers of Dagaare students should single out the speech sounds of English that are absent in Dagaare and teach them purposively to the Dagaare students. This will go a long way to reduce if not eradicate the phenomenon of Dagaare interference in the spoken English of Dagaare students.

- English language teachers should go beyond teaching the phonology of English to teaching English language usage in practical situations. The teaching of register in different fields will go a long way to minimize the transfer of concepts from Dagaare into English.

- English language teachers should adopt the transactional and transformational teaching methods as pedagogical tools in teaching Oral English. These could serve as remedial measures to help the Dagaare students in particular overcome these language difficulties.

- English language teachers at the SHS level should stamp their authority on how their students speak the English language. This will go a long way to minimize the heavy influence the L1 has on English. English language teachers in Dagaare communities should insist that they be the only models from whom their Dagaare students learn and pick up speech/oral competences. The trend where majority of student respondents indicated that other subject teachers and their fellow students other than their English language teachers are their models from whom they learn English orals skills is most unfortunate.

- English language teachers at the SHS level should teach Oral English in class more regularly than is currently the case. I recommend the Audio-lingual method of teaching for all English language teachers especially those who teach in Dagaare communities. The Audio Lingual teaching method states that it takes regular practice to learn oral skills in a second language.
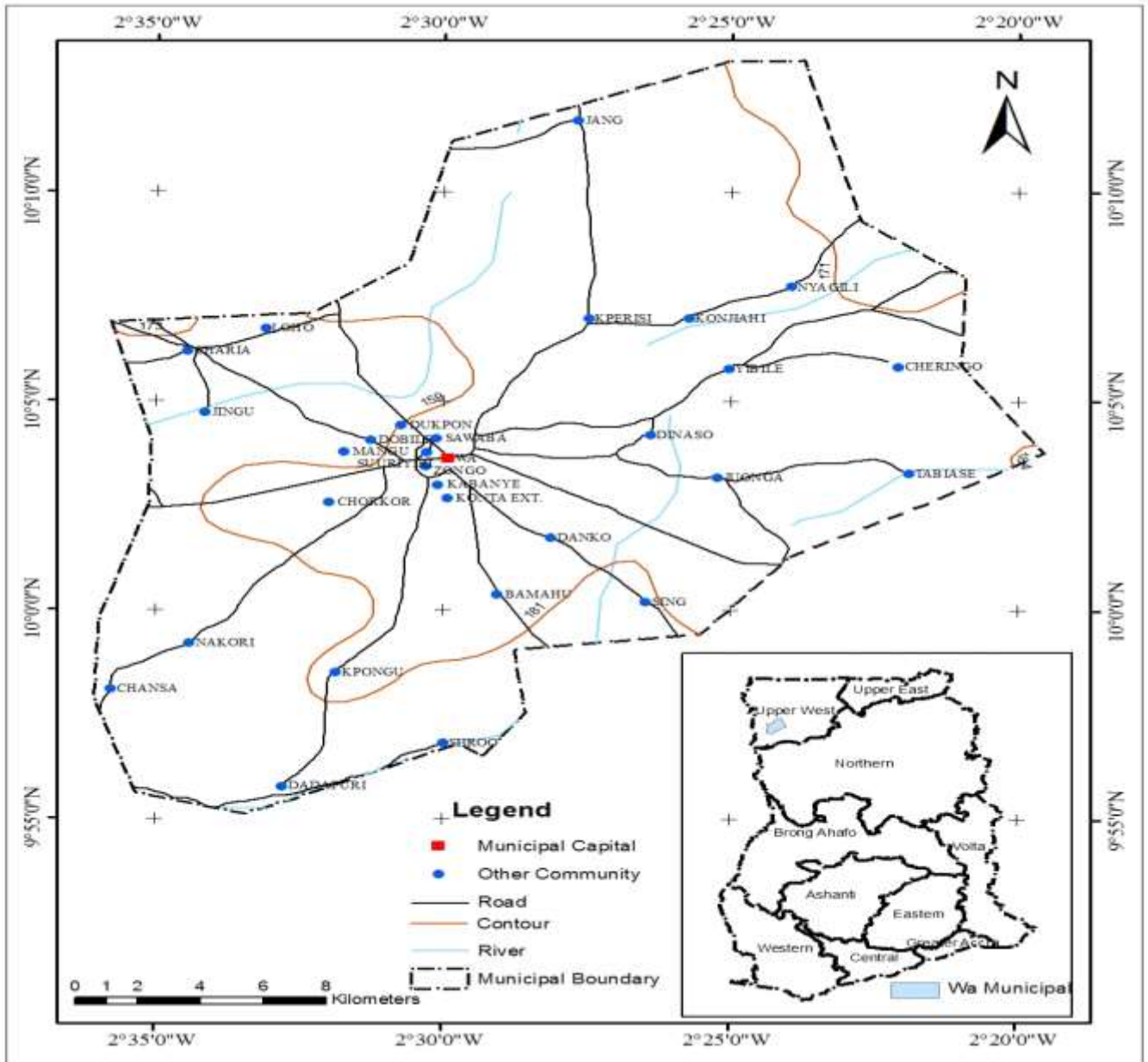
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Map showing the origin of English from the Indo-European family of languages

Adopted from Ethnologue (2019) Languages of the World

https://www.ethnologue.com/guides/largest-families

District Map of Wa showing Study Area.

Adapted from Aduah and Aabeyir (2012)