Enacting Translanguaging in a Ghanaian Multilingual Classroom: Code choices in minority language classrooms

David Dankwa-Apawu, University of Media, Arts and Communication
Yvonne Agbetsoamedo, University of Ghana
Elvis ResCue, University of Essex

Abstract

The present study addresses translanguaging as a theory that unravels the deployment of linguistic and semiotic resources for communication by monolinguals, bilinguals, and multilinguals. Secondly, it explores translanguaging as a linguistic practice with unique characteristics and functions. In the multilingual classroom, translanguaging has been used strategically or spontaneously as a pedagogical tool for effective instruction and other educational ends. The present case study is conducted in Santrokofi in Ghana and sought to examine translanguaging as a pedagogic practice in a multilingual classroom that is constrained by a bilingual education policy. Using classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and focus group interviews, the present study highlights the nature and the functions of translanguaging that takes place in the multilingual classroom. The findings of the study affirmed earlier findings that the multilingual classroom is an important site for translanguaging. Again, translanguaging practices that were observed in the classroom included translation, code-switching, repairing, and deployment of various linguistic and semiotic resources and modalities to enhance understanding, explain concepts, and facilitate home-school cooperation. The study also found that although translanguaging took place in the classroom, it was only allowed across English and Ewe, and excluded learners' mother tongue, Selee, because of the English-Ewe bilingual policy of the school. The teachers consequently frowned on learners' use of their mother tongue in class. The ensuing negative attitude towards Selee did not allow both teachers and learners to maximize their full repertoire for effecting instruction in the classroom. We consider this a constraint to effective translanguaging and propose a re-examination of Ghana's language-in-education policy and teacher reorientation and training as ways of reversing teachers' negative attitudes to maximize translanguaging in the multilingual classroom.

Keywords: *translanguaging, multilingualism, bilingual education, Santrokofi, Ghana*

Nya kpukpui

Numekuku sia ƒo nu tso nuƒoƒo sime wodoa gbegbɔgblɔvovowo le nuƒo ɖeka me si ɖea gbegbɔgblɔ kple dzesiŋutinunya ƒe nunɔamesiwo zazã hena kadodo to gbe ɖekaɖeka dolawo, gbe eve dolawo, kple gbegbɔgblɔ geɖe dolawo me. Evelia, eku nu me tso gbegbɔgblɔwo tsɔtsɔ yi teƒe bubuwo ŋu abe gbegbɔgblɔ ƒe nuwɔna si me nɔnɔme kple dɔwɔwɔ tɔxɛwo le ene. Le sukuxɔ si me wodoa gbe vovovowo le me la, wozã gbegbɔgblɔ vovovowo to aɖaŋu alo le wo ɖokui si abe nufiafia ƒe dɔwɔnu ene hena nufiafia nyuie kple hehenana ƒe taɖodzinu bubuwo. Le nusɔsrɔ̃ sia me la, míe wɔ numekuku le Santrokofi le Ghana alebe míalé ŋku ɖe gbegbɔgblɔwo tsɔtsɔ yi teƒe

bubuwo ŋu abe nufiafia ƒe dɔwɔnu ene le gbegbɔgblɔ geɖe me le sukuxɔ si me gbe eve dolawo ƒe hehenana ƒe ɖoɖo aɖe xea mɔ na. Numekuku si wowɔ fifia zã sukuxɔ me ŋkuléle ɖe nu ŋu, gbebiame siwo woɖo ɖe ɖoɖo afã kple afã nu, kple ƒuƒoƒo me gbebiamewo, alebe mia srɔnu tso aleke gbe vovovowo dodo ƒe nɔnɔme kple dɔwɔwɔwo le sukuxɔ wo me. Nusiwo ŋu woke ɖo le numekuku sia me ɖo kpe nusiwo ŋu woke ɖo va yi be gbegbɔgblɔ geɖe dodo ƒe sukuxɔ me nye nyatakakadzraɖoƒe vevi aɖe na gbegbɔgblɔ vovovowo. Ga yi edzi la, gbegɔmeɖeɖe ƒe nuwɔna siwo wokpɔna le sukuxɔa me dometɔ aɖewoe nye gbegɔmeɖeɖe, gbe vovovowo dodo, kple gbegbɔgblɔ kple dzesiŋutinunya ƒe nunɔamesiwo alebe gɔmesese nanyo ɖe edzi, aɖe nukpɔsusuwo me, eye wòana aƒeme akple sukuwo ƒe nusrɔsrɔ na nanɔ bɔbɔe. Numekukua ɖee fia hã be togbɔ be gbegbɔgblɔwo gɔmeɖeɖe gaglãa dzɔ le sukuxɔ me hã la, Eŋlisigbe kple Ewegbe koe woɖe mɔ na, eye wòɖe nusrɔ̃lawo ƒe aƒemegbe, Selee, le sukuxɔa me ɖe Eŋlisigbe kple Ewegbe ƒe dodowo ta. Nufialawo meda asi ɖe sukuviawo ƒe aƒemegbe zazã le sukuxɔa medzi o. Asi madamada ɖe sukuviawo ƒe aƒemegbe, Selee, dzi wɔe be nufialawo kple nusrɔ̃lawo siaa meteŋu zã wo ƒe gbegblɔgblɔwo katã le sukuxɔme o. Míebua esia be enye mɔxenu na gbegbɔgblɔ vovovowo le sukuxɔme eye míedo susu ɖa be woagbugbɔ ŋku alé ɖe Ghana ƒe gbegbɔgblɔ le hehenana me kple nufialawo ƒe tɔtrɔ kple hehenana ŋu abe mɔnu siwo dzi woato atrɔ asi le nufialawo ƒe nɔnɔme gbegblẽwo ŋu be woadzi gbegbɔgblɔ geɖe wu le sukuxɔ si me gbegbɔgblɔ geɖe le me ene.

Nya veviwo: *gbegbɔgblɔ vovowo dodo, gbe eve dodo, gbe eve dodo ƒe hehenana, Santrokofi, Ghana*

1   Introduction

Although the term translanguaging is recent, the phenomenon has long been universal among bilinguals and multilinguals and in multimodal communication contexts. The term was coined by Cen Williams to describe "a pedagogical practice which deliberately switches the language mode of input and output in bilingual classrooms" (Lewis, Jones and Baker, 2012, p. 643). Further attempts to clarify translanguaging as an educational practice expanded its meaning to incorporate pedagogical strategies that provide bilinguals and multilinguals the opportunities to deploy the full range of their linguistic and semiotic repertoire to enhance understanding and proficiency in bilingual education (Erling, et al., 2021; Yevudey, 2015).

The history of the term and its application in education and universally is relevant. Structuralist philosophical thought that had dominated linguistic inquiry until the 1960s construed language as a discrete or autonomous system. This philosophy had been grounded in Saussurean and later Chomskyan generative grammar, which highlighted "pre-existence" and internal "capacity" as critical characteristics of language (Garcia & Leiva, 2014, p. 201). Proponents of this theory defended the independence of the human capacity for language and downplayed the influence of the social world on language. This thinking accentuated strict

dichotomies between languages and spread negative beliefs about bilingualism, such as bilingualism causing mental confusion (Lewis et al., 2012). The overall effect of structuralist orientation on bilingual education was strictly separate periods of instruction or "pull out" programmes in schools where speakers of minority languages learned the majority language as L2 (Garcia & Kleyn, 2016, p. 24).

However, post-structuralist thoughts that emerged subsequently called for a departure from language as an autonomous system to language as "doing" (Pennycook, 2010, p. 9) and languages as an ecology. Consequently, Welsh educators began to experiment with the ideology that flexible micro-level alternation between languages by bilingual learners is useful for bilingual education, hence the coining of the term to refer to the practice where bilinguals flexibly deploy their full repertoire for purposes of understanding. The term has since been associated with educational practice; however, emerging dimensions of translanguaging propose a broader use of the term and an examination of the phenomenon outside the school domain (Lewis et al., 2012).

Baker's (2011) definition of translanguaging as the process of making meaning, sharing experiences, and gaining understanding and knowledge using two languages is more appealing to both educational and universal translanguaging trajectories. Subsequent applications of the term have demonstrated that translanguaging is not only a phenomenon among bilinguals and multilinguals but also among monolinguals. The term now applies to speakers maximizing all linguistic and nonlinguistic resources (including modalities) in communication. The present study adopts this wider view of translanguaging to capture the maximum use of semiotic and media resources in the classroom. The objective of the present study, therefore, is to:

1. investigate translanguaging as a pedagogical practice in two multilingual classrooms in Santrokofi
2. assess the roles and constraints of translanguaging in the teaching and learning process in the selected classrooms
3. propose ways of maximizing translanguaging in the selected multilingual classrooms

The study attempts to address the following research questions:

1. What elements characterize translanguaging as a pedagogical practice in selected classrooms in Santrokofi?
2. What are the roles and constraints of translanguaging in the teaching and learning process in the selected classrooms in Santrokofi?
3. How can translanguaging be maximized in the multilingual classroom?

The present investigation is significant for several reasons: First, earlier studies on translanguaging seem to have over concentrated on speakers of minority languages schooling in majority settings; those that focus on majority L1 speakers learning the target language L2 have focused on urban communities where bilingualism or multilingualism is driven by migration. Second, translanguaging studies have mainly investigated translanguaging in bilingual contexts where their language-in-education policies align closely with their everyday use of language, i.e., the dominant local language as lingua franca and the target official language. However, there are communities where trilingualism or multilingualism is the norm rather than the exception. The fundamental question to ask is how would translanguaging proceed in a trilingual setting which is constrained by a bilingual policy?

The present study draws its relevance from examining translanguaging in this peculiar situation where the mother tongue of multilingual speakers is sidelined by a bilingual education policy where the dominant language of the community, in this case Ewe, and English are the expected medium of instruction. Ghana's language-in-education policy is essentially bilingual, dominated by English as the target language and the official language, and paired up with any of the nine government-sponsored Ghanaian languages as subjects of study. These government-sponsored languages include Akan (three dialects: Akuapem Twi, Asante Twi and Fante), Dagaare, Ga, Dangbe, Dagbani, Ewe, Gonja, Kasem and Nzama (cf. Agbozo & ResCue, 2020). These Ghanaian languages are used as medium of instruction in the first three years of primary education (Grades 1-3) after which they are only taught as core subjects at the junior high school level (Grade 4 to Junior High School 3) and as elective subjects subsequently. English takes over as medium of instruction from Grade 4 and subsequently remains the sole medium of instruction for all subjects except languages (Agbozo & ResCue, 2020; Ansah, 2014).

The rich linguistic diversity of Ghana makes this arrangement problematic. With over 79 indigenous languages spoken across the length and breadth of the country, it is certain that a bilingual policy that favours only 11 or so languages would marginalize the rest of the languages,

many of which are not developed enough for academic use. As most of these marginalized languages are spoken as mother tongues in the rural communities, Ghana's bilingual education policy in its current form denies many learners in these communities the fine opportunity to receive instruction in their mother tongue, a situation that runs contrary to UNESCO's (1953) recommendation. The present study attempts to highlight this peculiar situation and how translanguaging would play out in classrooms in a context such as this.

2   Literature Review

2.1 Translanguaging as Theory of Language Practice

Wei (2018, p. 10) proposes translanguaging as a "good candidate for a theory of language practice." The call for such a theory has been made by Kramsch (2015) under the influence of Bourdieu's (1977) notion of *habitus*, a term applied in social anthropology to characterize the overall repertoire of knowledge accessible in each culture. Translanguaging then, from Wei's viewpoint, is a linguistic habitus constituted by and constitutive of the material interaction between a culture's social structure and its human agency (Wei, 2018). Translanguaging embodies the totality of the linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge that emerges from and underpins our social actions.

   To illustrate, our interpretation of the material world is born out of the knowledge accumulated about it; however, as our interaction with the material world is not static but evolves, this interaction (shaped by sociocultural knowledge) continues to create new knowledge, and this same expanded knowledge is what we use to characterize the material world. Ours is, therefore, an ever-ending cycle (Wei, 2018) "in a continuous becoming" (Garcia & Wei, 2014, p. 8; Garcia and Leiva, 2014, p. 202) or "continual becoming" (Baynham & Lee, 2019, p. 16) which creates a pool of resources for engaging with the world. As Garcia and Leiva (2014, p. 202) put it, "…language is an ongoing process that only exists as languaging." Garcia and Leiva (2014) buttress this view with Maturana and Varela's (1998) argument that, "[i]t is by languaging that the act of knowing, in the behavioral coordination, which is language, brings forth a world. We work out our lives in a mutual linguistic coupling, not because language permits us to reveal ourselves but because we are constituted in language in a continuous becoming that we bring forth with others" (Maturana & Varela, 1998, p. 234-235, cited in Garcia

& Leiva, 2014, p. 202). This has become a popular framework for legitimately conceptualizing language and communication as a "Trans-", signaling "crossing" (Hawkins, 2020, p. 23). However, this crossing is not just alternating between autonomous systems and modalities; rather, it is a fluid, mutually transformative, non-hierarchical, and function-driven, collectively reflective of a complex socioculturally normed action and process of norming. The present study recognizes that the classroom is an important site or space where diverse discourses are enacted through the maximization of linguistic and non-linguistic resources to achieve educational goals and that is the essence of translanguaging.

2.2 Review of Related Studies

The term *translanguaging* has been linked to other fluid language practices labelled differently as *polylingualism*, *transidiomatic practices*, *metrolingualism*, and *codemeshing* though there are clear nuances in their application (Garcia & Leiva, 2014). The point of divergence for translanguaging, according to Garcia and Leiva (2014, p. 200), is that "it is transformative, attempting to wipe out the hierarchy of languaging practices that deem some more valuable than others." It is an umbrella term that embraces translation, code-switching, and all the other fluid language practices. Studies in translanguaging blur the superiority of one code over others and rather accentuate how the codes mutually constitute and reconstitute each other in the processes of their deployment. Since the first use of the term, a plethora of studies have investigated translanguaging as a pedagogical practice in bilingual schools. Emerging studies have expanded the definition of translanguaging to include the full "repertoire of multilingual, multimodal, multisensory and multi-semiotic resources that language users orchestrate in sense- and meaning-making" (Hua et al., 2017, p. 413).

Earlier studies such as Creese and Blackledge (2010), Garcia and Kleyn (2016) and Yevudey (2015) have explored the pedagogical use of translanguaging from various trajectories using various research approaches. Yevudey's (2015) work, for instance, investigated translanguaging practices in Ghanaian classrooms. Specifically, the study explored the linguistic choices that both teachers and learners make and whether those choices are influenced by policy, perception, and language attitudes. Using a mix of qualitative tools (including focus group interviews, classroom observation and interviews) and a questionnaire survey, the study consequently provided an overview of the relevance of translanguaging as a pedagogic tool in the Ghanaian classroom. Findings of the study in two classroom types – bilingual classrooms (thus, government schools)

and monolingual classrooms (thus, private schools) – observed showed that translanguaging was pedagogically relevant as it was used to reiterate and explain concepts and responses. The survey highlighted teachers' and learners' positive attitudes toward translanguaging and endorsement of its use in the classroom. Yevudey's (2015) work is significant because apart from being among the few studies that have examined translanguaging from the pre-tertiary education level in Ghana, it has also documented young learners' endorsement of translanguaging in the classroom. In a related study, Creese and Blackledge (2010) advocated a flexible bilingual approach to language teaching and learning in Chinese and Gujarati community language schools in the UK. Using data collection methods such as observation, interviews and recordings of four case studies involving Gujarati, Turkish, Cantonese, and Mandarin schools in Leicester, London, Manchester and Birmingham, the study demonstrated the effectiveness of translanguaging as a flexible bilingual pedagogy in complementary schools. Other findings of the study supported "identity performance, lesson accomplishment, and participant confidence" as some significant benefits of translanguaging (Creese & Blackledge, 2010, p. 112).

Garcia and Kleyn (2016) initiated a large-scale longitudinal study involving 67 elementary, middle and high schools across the State of New York. Each participating school had an above average number of emergent Spanish-English bilingual students. The study design was a collaborative transformative participatory action research inquiry in which teachers, and coaches, in teams, explored how translanguaging impacted the education of bilingual students. Each team was adequately resourced, trained and empowered to own their efforts and share their successes and struggles. Findings of the study showed, among other things, how translanguaging allowed students to deploy their full linguistic repertoire to influence learning and facilitated home-school cooperation.

It is clear from the literature that the benefits of translanguaging abound, ranging from creating the right home-school connection that builds learners' confidence for learning to deepening learners' understanding of concepts. Methods employed in translanguaging studies have been varied, including both quantitative and qualitative designs. The contexts of study have included both majority and minority context although a large chunk appears to be concentrated on minority settings.

The present study identifies this gap and attempts to add to studies in the majority setting. The setting chosen for the present study is unique because unlike earlier studies where the languages of bilinguals were the focus of translanguaging in the classroom, in the present

context, the mother tongue of participants is sidelined in the language-in-education policy and for that reason translanguaging occurred in two languages that learners were learning. This context presents a peculiar trajectory for study and broadens the general discussion and research on translanguaging.

3   Context

The context for the present study is Santrokofi, originally in the northern part of the Volta Region of Ghana but now part of the newly created Oti Region. The people are identified as Balee indigenes who speak Selee, a Niger-Congo language of the Kwa subgroup (Agbetsoamedo, 2014). Santrokofi was originally made up of three traditional communities namely Benua, Bume and Gbodome but has now been demarcated into five traditional areas. The peculiar history and location of Santrokofi and the people's association with Ewe speakers and other ethnic groupings have offered the people of Santrokofi a unique trilingual or multilingual character. Essentially, almost every indigene of Santrokofi speaks at least three languages, including Selee, Ewe and permutations of English (if educated), Akan and any other Ghanaian language. The peculiar multilingual situation in Santrokofi creates a near-triglossia where Selee is spoken at home (or with indigenes), Ewe on the streets and in semi-formal domains, and English in schools and formal domains. Per the language-in-education policy of the Ghana Education Service (in the Hohoe Municipality, where Santrokofi was located until recently) English and Ewe are the languages studied as subjects and could be used for instruction. It turns out that Selee is not developed enough for academic use nor officially recognized and accepted for use in school. This is coupled with the fact that none of the teachers in the school studied spoke Selee.

4   Methods

4.1 Approach

The present study adopted the qualitative research approach as the blueprint for carrying out the investigation for at least these two reasons. First, the study was intended to have a holistic insight into the practice of translanguaging in a rural multilingual classroom setting where both teachers

and learners were essentially multilingual but had different attitudes towards multilingualism. Second, although translanguaging is a natural phenomenon in bilingual and multilingual settings, it is construed differently, hence the practice of translanguaging follows different trajectories. This is also attributable to different classroom resources, characteristics and constraints. The qualitative framework therefore offered the flexibility needed to adapt the study methodology to context specific and emerging situations as well as unpredictable paths of discovery (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2000).

Specifically, the present study adopted the case study design to investigate translanguaging in two classrooms (Primary 1 and 4) of a selected school in Santrokofi in Ghana. The case study design allowed for an exploration and in-depth study through the deployment of multiple data collection methods to enrich the study.

4.2 Data Collection

Several data collection methods were deployed to unravel the different facets of translanguaging in the multilingual classroom. These included observation, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions/interviews.

4.2.1 Observation

Non-participant observation sessions were carried out in 2 classrooms (Primary 1 and 4). The decision to observe was influenced by the prevailing bilingual education and medium of instruction policy of the Ghana Education Service (GES). The policy prescribes that the dominant Ghanaian language of the district or municipality (not the community) be used as medium of instruction in school from Primary 1 to 3 while English remains a subject. Subsequently, English becomes the medium of instruction while the dominant Ghanaian language remains a subject. The study chose Primary 1 to investigate how the policy influences translanguaging in the classroom among learners transitioning from kindergarten (and sometimes home) to school. These learners have their own mother tongue and learn the dominant local language (Ewe) and the official language (English). Primary 4 is also important for the study because learners at this stage switch from the dominant Ghanaian language as a medium of instruction to English as the medium of instruction. The study sought to investigate how this transition influences translanguaging.

Using observation, data were collected in the form of segment logs for each lesson observed. The segment log chronicled the lessons into logical parts or activities such as preparation for the lesson, revision of previous lesson or relevant background, the introduction of a new lesson, continuation, assessment, and ending or consolidation. These segments constituted the focus of transcriptions or records of lessons.

4.2.2   Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to elicit information from teachers before and after each observation. Interviews were deployed based on Mann's (2011) constructionist view that "all interviews are already sites of social interaction, where ideas, facts, views, details, and stories are collaboratively produced by interviewee and interviewer" (Mann, 2011, p. 6). The semi-structured interview enhanced rapport between researchers and respondents and gave the flexibility to cover a range of topics while maintaining the focus of the study (Hedger & Wicaksono, 2014). In all, five (5) interviews were conducted: 1 with the Headteacher, 2 each with the teachers whose classes were observed. There were 5-8 minutes interview sessions with the class teachers before each observation and 5-10 minutes post-observation interaction with teachers. The pre-observation interviews were meant to elicit information on class sizes, the language background of learners, the topic for the lesson, teachers' own expectations and any other issues of interest. The post-observation questions afforded an interaction with the teachers on a range of issues including delivery of expectations, challenges, justification of choices (e.g., language) and other issues of interest to the researchers. The interview with the Headteacher was to elicit information on language policy, the practical application of the policy, general attitudes of teachers, learners, community members and the overall challenges confronting the school.

4.2.3   Focus Group Discussion

Based on Greeff (2005) proposal that Focus Group Interviews (FGI), also known as Focus Group Discussion (FGD), allow the researcher to explore the thoughts and emotions of participants, the present study deployed FGI in the data collection to highlight the overall connections between teachers thought and emotions, on one hand, and the practice of translanguaging, on the other hand. Effectively, the method gave insights about the thoughts and feelings of teachers towards translanguaging and the peculiar multilingual characteristics and challenges of learners and/or the people of the community. Essentially, the FGI was deployed for complementary reasons, i.e.,

to "encourage participants to share perceptions, points of view, experiences, wishes and concerns, without pressurizing participants to vote or reach consensus" (Greef, 2008, p. 300). In all, 3 FGIs were carried out: one involving the teachers at the selected school; another for the adult community members and the other for the youth of the community. Eight (8) teachers took part in the FGI for the school. These teachers were all trained and taught various classes and subjects. The interview took the form of responding to questions regarding their translanguaging practices, attitudes, beliefs and the language-in-education policy although the word translanguaging was not mentioned to them. Nine (9) adult community members (4 females and 5 males) mostly drawn from a church also responded to questions regarding translanguaging practices they were aware of in the school. The youth group (4 participants) expressed their thoughts and feelings on language use in the school.

4.3 Data Handing

All data retrieved for the present study were recorded, transcribed and translated for analysis. Both audio and video recordings were complemented by journals and field notes to ensure validity and reliability of data. Tables 1 and 2 show excerpts of segment log of the class observation.

Class:	1	**Class size:** 23
Teacher:	Trained	
Language of Instruction:	Ewe and English	
Topic:	Road safety	
Teaching material:	Poster	
Duration:	30 minutes	

9:00   *T*   [English]: Hello!

SS [English]: Hi! (Shouts)

T [Ewe]: Get ready for the class. Preparation

T   [Ewe]:   Hurry up! Sit down for the class.

T   [English]: No talking, if I hear you talking, you will stand.

And you will not be my friend again.

T   [English]: Today, we are going on with another lesson.

T   [English]: Before the lesson, I will tell you a story.

T   [English]: The story is about Barbara.

SS [English]: Stop talking

(*Teacher* e*ngages in a round of recitals with* learners.)

T   [English]: Hello

T   [English]: A duck walking

SS [Sound]:   Chachacha!

T   [English]: Walking, Walking,

SS [Sound]:   Chachacha!

9:10   *T*   [Ewe]:   Some of you cross the road before coming to school.

       T   [Ewe]:   Which of you crosses the road before coming to school?

       S   [Gesture]: (*Raises hand up*)

       T   [Ewe]:   Frederica, how do you cross the road when you are coming to school?

       S   [Ewe]:   I look at both sides of the road.

       T   [Ewe]:   What are the names of these sides you are talking about?

       S   [Ewe]:   Left and right.

       T   [Ewe]:   Very good! Clap for her.

                          (*Class clap for a learner*)

                          Who can tell us what we are going to learn today?

       T   [Akan]:   Who can tell us what we are going to learn today?

       T   [Picture]: (*Showing a picture to the class*)

       S   [Ewe]:   How to cross the road when coming to school?

       T   [English]: Good, in English it is called "Road Safety

       T   [English]: Say after me, "Road Safety"

       SS [English]: Road Safety.

Key: *T* (*Teacher*)*, S* (*Student/Learner*)*, SS* (*Students/Learners*)

Table 1: An excerpt of the Segment Log of a lesson observed in Primary 1

Class: 4

Class size: 7

Teachers: 2 Trained teachers and 1 mentee teacher

Language of Instruction: Ewe and English

Topic: Punctuations

Teaching material: Blackboard illustrations

Duration: 30 minutes

9:00 *T* [English]: Hello! (*Calls class to order*)

   SS [English]: Hi!

   T [Ewe]:   Get ready for the class.

   T [English]: My head, my shoulders, my knees…, ready, go!

   SS [English]: My head, my shoulders, my knees, my toes … (*Learners recite*).

   T [English]: Last week, we studied nouns.

   T [Ewe]:   How do we call nouns in Ewe?

   S [Ewe]:   "ŋkɔnya"

   T [English]: Good, how many nouns can you identify in the recital?

   T [English]: Let's identify them together.

   SS [English]: (*Class count the number of noun*s) Seven.

     (*Teacher moves to a new lesson*)

9:08 *T* [English]: Today we want to move on to something special

   T [English]: Punctuation, say it after me.

   SS [Sound]:   Punctuation!

   T [English]: If you are walking and you get to the end of where you are going,

         What do you do?

   SS [English]: You stop.

   T [English]: Good. Full stop, say it after me.

   SS [English]: Full stop!

   T [English]: (*Introduces three other punctuation signs*)

9:15 *T* [English]: Look at this. (*Showing sign*) Full stop

    T [Ewe]:   "Tɔtɔ dzesi" Full stop

    SS [Ewe]:   "Tɔtɔ dzesi"

    T [English]: Comma.

    T [Ewe]:   "Gbɔvie dzesi"

    SS [Ewe]:   "Gbɔvie dzesi"

    T [English]: Exclamation mark.

    T [Ewe]:   "Ɣlidodo dzesi"

    SS [Ewe]:   "Ɣlidodo dzesi"

    T [English]: Question mark.

    T [Ewe]:   "Biabia dzesi"

    SS [Ewe]:   "Biabia dzesi"

Table 2: An excerpt of the Segment Log of a lesson observed in Primary 4

Data from interviews and Focus Group Interviews (FGIs) were also transcribed and translated after which various themes were teased out of the transcripts. The transcription of recordings was carried out on account of "talk, time, nonverbal actions, speaker/hearer relationships, physical orientation, multiple languages, translations" (Davidson, 2009, p. 37). Considering the long duration and sometimes the dragging associated with class control and management, transcription of data for the study was highly selective. Selectivity also reduced the complexity and the difficulty of transcribing and translating from one language to the other and including multimodal transcription. The present study narrowed the transcription to the features of discourse that have primacy and relevance to the objectives of the study (Davidson, 2009). Accordingly, only the relevant portions of the recordings were transcribed for analysis.

5   Data Analysis

The purpose of the present study was, first to establish that translanguaging took place in the classroom and, second, to examine the discursive characteristics and the value of translanguaging as a pedagogical tool in this space. The study deployed an adaptation of Scollon and Scollon's (2004) Nexus Discourse Analysis to highlight the nature and meaning of the enactment of

classroom discourses which maximize available resources within the semiotic ecosystem. The nexus construct is a strategy for integrating analysis of different modes and levels of discourses.

Instead of highlighting the quantitative preponderance of discursive characteristics of data accessed (an approach translanguaging, as a practice theory, blurs or discourages), the study adopts a descriptive approach to the analysis of data. Accordingly, the study highlighted the fluid interaction and complementarity between the different modes and levels of discourses. The nexus analysis model enabled the thematizing of translanguaging in the classroom as involving agency, representation, multimodality, and social structures (Scollon, 2001). Drawing on these themes as evidenced in the data, the study analysed the classroom as a translanguaging space or site, focusing on (1) how translanguaging is used as a pedagogical practice, (2) the constraints in effective use of translanguaging in the space and (3) ways to maximize the use of translanguaging in the classroom.

6   Results

6.1 The Classroom as a Translanguaging Space

To address the research question of what elements characterize translanguaging in the classrooms observed, the first consideration of the analysis was to demonstrate that translanguaging occurred in the classroom. The analysis took the broader view of translanguaging as deploying both linguistic and semiotic resources in the teaching and learning process. The dominant themes that emerged from the analysis as captured in Table 3 are material, agent, and action.

Material	Pictures, gestures, sounds, images, posters, inscriptions, blackboard, wall inscriptions, songs, teaching and learning materials,
Agent	Teachers, teaching assistants and learners
Action	Silence, shouting, singing, speaking, writing, reading, reciting, gesturing, laughing

Table 3: Characteristics of the classroom as translanguaging space

All the data sources highlight these three themes as characteristic of translanguaging in the classroom.

In the classrooms observed, there were material resources deployed for teaching and learning. These included wall pictures, images and posters which the teachers used in their lessons. Teachers and learners also used their voices (oral medium) to communicate and complemented this with gestures, songs and blackboard illustrations and writings and any available teaching and learning material, including the learners themselves.

In the lessons observed, both the teachers and the learners were identified as active agents of translanguaging in the classroom although the teacher tended to dominate. The teacher, as usual, introduced the lessons, took control of the class, taught the lessons, and assessed and graded learners' work and provided feedback and remediation. The teachers' dominance was very high. They played roles such as class control, individual assistance, remediation, assessment and grading of learners' work. The learners generally listened, contributed to discussions (answered questions and in rare cases asked questions), sang songs and recitations, read independently or along with the teacher, wrote exercises, and basically followed instructions given.

Learners also provided both solicited and unsolicited assistance to their peers and sometimes gossiped with their peers while lessons were ongoing. Actions common in the classrooms included silence, speaking, shouting, singing, reading, gesturing, laughing, watching, walking, showing and pointing. Significant in the data is the observation of the flexible connectedness of material, agent and action in the translanguaging in the classroom.

6.2 The Nature of Translanguaging in the Classroom

To evaluate the nature of translanguaging that is enacted in the classroom space, the analysis examined navigation across verbal, modal and discursive characteristics. Table 4 highlights the nature of translanguaging practices enacted at the target space.

Verbal	English, Ewe, Akan, Selee (code-switching, translation, rephrasing)
Modal	Pictures, sounds (voices), sight, written, silence
Discursive	Reading, writing, listening, singing, speaking, gesturing, laughing

Table 4: Nature of translanguaging in classroom space

From the analysis, while English, Ewe, Akan and Selee formed the verbal repertoire of the classes observed, translanguaging mainly occurred in English and Ewe because of the bilingual policy in the classroom. This is augmented by modalities such as texts, videos, pictures, and other discursive activities like speaking, singing, shouting, gesturing, laughing and even silence. The fluid mixture and interplay of these elements was evident in the data. Hence, agents alternated not only languages but also modes and discursivities. Generally, translanguaging in the classroom took the form of translation, codeswitching, repairing and mode-switching (oral to visual or vice versa).

6.3 Translanguaging as a Pedagogical Practice

The analysis also unraveled the pedagogical function of translanguaging in the classroom. Baker (2011) highlighted four potential values of translanguaging in the classroom: promoting fuller and deeper understanding, assisting bilingual learners to develop oral communication and literacy in their less dominant language, facilitating home-school cooperation, and integrating speakers with different degrees of fluency (Baker, 2011, pp. 289-290). In Primary 1, translanguaging characterized the mode of instruction, promoting deeper understanding and facilitating the home-school transition. The class teacher was mindful of the language backgrounds of each student and made efforts to ensure they understood instructions or the lesson. This is evident in the following extract from the segment log:

> T [Ewe]:   Who can tell us what we are going to learn today?
>   (Showing a picture to the class)
> T [Akan]:   Who can tell us what we are going to learn today?
> S [Ewe]:   How to cross the road when coming to school.
> T [English]: Good, in English it is called "Road Safety

In the above extract, the teacher used a picture to engage learners in a conversation about the topic to be studied and ask learners to guess what the lesson was going to be about. The teacher further posed a question in Ewe and attempted to translate the question into Akan, which she was not too fluent in. She then introduced the topic in English. The translation from Ewe to Akan and then English was to facilitate understanding and to help learners to engage with the pedagogic processes. The teacher subsequently in a post-less interview explained that two learners in the

class were Akan speakers and were not too familiar with Ewe, hence her decision to sometimes switch to Akan.

While Baker's (2011) propositions strongly guided the evaluation of the use of translanguaging in the classrooms observed, the study explored other peculiar or specific functions of translanguaging in the classrooms observed. Specific functions of translanguaging identified in the data included using translanguaging to draw attention, to engage learners, to enforce discipline and to make learners comfortable in class. All these directly and indirectly contributed to the overall pedagogical objectives of the teachers.

6.4 Constraints in the Effective Use of Translanguaging

The data unraveled the challenges that confronted the effective deployment of translanguaging in the classrooms of the selected school in Santrokofi. One major constraint highlighted in the data was the nature of multilingualism in the Santrokofi community. Although both teachers and learners were essentially trilingual or plurilingual, they spoke different languages or had different levels of proficiency. It was found that almost all the learners spoke Selee as their mother tongue but learned Ewe (from the community, the school and sometimes from home) and English mainly at school. On the other hand, none of the teachers spoke Selee. Some spoke Ewe, Akan, Lelemi, Sekpele, or other languages as their mother tongue, although the majority were fluent in Ewe. Of course, all teachers were fluent in English. The challenge then was with making concepts accessible in the mother tongue of learners as most of the learners were learning to speak Ewe and English, which were the selected languages of the bilingual policy of Ghana Education Service (GES) in the Hohoe Municipality, where Santrokofi was located until recently.

Teachers' language attitudes also played out as a constraint in the effective use of translanguaging in the classroom. Different teachers appeared to have different understanding of the GES bilingual policy. Some teachers opted for the strict adherence to the policy while others understood the need to implement the policy within the peculiar multilingual situation of the community. Translanguaging practices were evident in the classrooms observed where English, Ewe and Akan were adopted in the classroom.

When teachers were asked about the role of other languages such as Selee in the classroom, some teachers expressed their discomfort with the learners speaking Selee because it was not sanctioned or developed for use as a medium of instruction nor to be taught as a subject.

Teachers who were open to the use of Selee in the classrooms did not mind integrating it into their teaching. Some teachers, however, thought that since Selee was neither examinable nor as developed as English and Ewe, learners ought not waste their time using it. "They could use it at home but not in school," one teacher remarked in the focus group interview. It was reported and observed that teachers rebuked or punished learners when they used Selee in class. "In the past, crooked shells were hung on the necks of learners who were found speaking Selee in the classroom," a youth of the community stated in the focus group interview. Other teachers explained that they rather strategically allowed the use of Selee to deepen learners' understanding or when they realized that learners were struggling to grasp concepts.

6.5 Maximizing Translanguaging in the Classroom

Some proposals emerged from the interview and the Focus Group Interview data elicited for the study as well as observer recommendations. Some teachers saw nothing wrong with allowing the use of Selee in the classroom. They were convinced that the learners' mother tongue was an important resource for teaching and learning. This is reinforced in the extract below taken from the focus group interview session with the teachers.

> T1: *When I notice that the learners are struggling to understand a concept, I allow those who understand Selee to explain the concept in Selee for the rest of the class to understand.*

This proposal meant a change in the language-in-education policy to accommodate Selee or a change in teachers' own attitude towards the mother tongue of the learners and the need to acknowledge all languages as vital in the semiotic ecosystem. This proposal, in part, emerged from the observation and reports of some teachers' poor attitude towards the language. Some teachers sometimes rebuked learners from speaking it. The following extract was a remark from a teacher when he overheard learners speaking Selee during a lesson observed:

> *T* [English]: Now, let's look at the comma, what do you call it in Ewe?
> *S* [Ewe]:   Comma, which means to take a breath.
> *S* [Selee]:   (*Students chit chatting in Selee*)
> **_T_ [English]: Stop speaking your language.**

The proposal for recognition and acceptance of Selee was reinforced in the focus group interview with community members and the youth of the community. One youth expressed concerns about their language not being spoken in their own schools and proposed:

> Y3: I wish Selee was recognized and added to the languages of instruction and studied like any other language; at least spoken in class freely even if it would not be studied like Ewe and English.

As far back as 1953, UNESCO had highlighted the benefits of the mother tongue medium of instruction. Several decades on, it is worrying that there are still barriers to implementing mother tongue instruction in classrooms in Santrokofi. This was attributed to policy challenges as Selee was not developed enough for educational purposes. Again, none of the teachers in the schools in Santrokofi spoke Selee. This was reinforced in the focus group interviews. The proposal then is for the state to do more in the development of Ghanaian languages for use at least at the basic levels of education.

7   Discussion

Studies on translanguaging originated from the school, where translanguaging was conceptualized as a pedagogical tool for bilingual education. The present study has confirmed that multilingual classrooms are rife with translanguaging practices. The evidence is drawn from the materials, agents and actions characteristic of translanguaging which are found in various contexts or spaces. These elements are earlier reported in Hua, Wei and Lyons (2017), who investigated a Polish family retail shop in East London as a translanguaging site or space. In the present study, as with earlier studies, these elements bear and enact discourses that flexibly deploy resources within the semiotic ecosystem. A flexible mix of materials like pictures, recitals in different languages, sounds, and other teaching and learning materials enact various discourses of different connections for the overall objective of facilitating understanding and class integration.

The report on the nature of translanguaging in the classroom also aligns with earlier studies like Canals (2021), which investigated how gesture could form part of the comprehensible input for learners. Data from the present study of translanguaging show a vast repertoire of semiotic resources interwoven in the enactment of classroom discourses. The present study reports code

switching and translation as translanguaging in the sense put forward by Garcia (2011, p. 147) "[t]ranslanguaging includes code-switching, the shift between two languages in context, and it also includes translation; however, it differs from both of these simple practices in that it refers to the process by which bilingual students perform bilingually in the myriad ways in classrooms – reading, writing, taking notes, discussing, signing, etc." This is corroborated in Yevudey (2015), who found that both teachers and learners used code-switching and translation to reiterate a point, explain a concept, or explain an answer by a student.

The above dovetails into the pedagogical functions of translanguaging. The traditional function of translanguaging as a means of making sense and enhancing understanding in communication (Baker, 2011; Lewis, Jones and Baker, 2012) was confirmed. Specifically, Baker's (2011) proposed potential benefits or function of translanguaging are confirmed in the present study. To reiterate, the present study confirmed that translanguaging in the classroom fostered understanding, promoted home-school cooperation, especially for beginners, and facilitated integration of speakers of different degrees of fluency. It is significant to note that the deployment of translanguaging in the classrooms observed was spontaneous rather than strategic as suggested in Cenoz and Gorter (2017).

The present study also identified some constraints to the effective deployment of translanguaging as a pedagogical practice. These include negative attitudes of teachers towards some languages and translanguaging practices such as code switching. This attitude was found to be potentially inimical to learners' home language or mother tongue as suggested by Jones and Lewis' (2014). In the present study, translanguaging was found largely with the use of Ewe and English (and sometimes Akan). Learners' mother tongue was severely marginalized because it was not developed for academic use; it was not examinable nor was it approved for the bilingual education policy of Ghana Education Service. The reality was that practically no teacher in the school could speak Selee and therefore the language could not be a significant semiotic resource for translanguaging, at least as far as teachers were concerned.

To reverse this, it has been proposed that steps be taken by policy makers to develop the language and accept its use in class. This development, recognition and acceptance will not only embolden teachers to accept the use of Selee in the classroom but also make Selee a significant part of the linguistic repertoire for classroom communication. The proposal calls for a broader look at the language-in-education policy. A more purposeful and responsive policy would be one "that allows for several languages in the classroom and enables learners to utilize their whole

linguistic repertoire to interrogate issues, understand the subject matter and express themselves fully," as suggested by Bagwasi (2016, p. 1). In a multilingual country such as Ghana, this call is urgent and important. As equally reiterated in Reily et al. (2022, p. 1), "[t]ranslanguaging could represent a positive shift to the way in which multilingual language practices are talked about and can contribute to decolonising language policy in African contexts."

In summary, the present study has confirmed the multilingual classroom as a translanguaging site, highlighting multimodality, translation, codeswitching and repairing as the major characteristics of translanguaging in the classroom. The study also supports earlier proposed pedagogical advantages of translanguaging such as nurturing deeper understanding, promoting home-school cooperation and fostering integration of different speakers, among other functions. The study again highlights poor attitudes and practices of some instructors and policy challenges as constraints to effective deployment of translanguaging in the classroom. The study has therefore proposed a change of attitude on the part of teachers and policy realignment towards the academic and social aspirations of learners and the community.

8   Conclusion

To conclude, translanguaging presents an apt picture of the sociolinguistic reality of bilingual/multilingual societies, and it is high time the school gets accustomed to this reality and aligns teaching and learning with this reality. Just as multilingual interlocutors in various social domains maximize their semiotic resources for effective communication, the classroom can also take full advantage of all available semiotic resources to enhance instruction for maximum pedagogical benefits. This will require a change of attitudes towards bilingual and multilingual education. Educational stakeholders need to conceptualize language as a resource and all languages as part of the linguistic or semiotic ecosystem. This will also mean construing languages as fluid and flexible rather than discrete and compartmentalized systems. Eventually, attitudes and practices that make linguistic hegemony fester would have to give way to allow for the maximization of all the resources within the semiotic ecosystem. Attitudinal change would be driven by policy but also through further research, dissemination of valuable research findings and training on both spontaneous and strategic use of translanguaging in the classroom.

References

Agbetsoamedo, Y. (2014). Noun classes in Sɛlɛɛ. *Journal of West African Languages, 41*(1), 95-124.

    https://journalofwestafricanlanguages.org/downloads/download/119-volume-41-number-1/615-noun-classes-in-s-l

Agbozo, G. E. & ResCue, E. (2021). Educational language policy in an African country: Making a place for code-switching/translanguaging. *Applied Linguistics Review, 12*(4), 503-522. https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2020-2002

Ansah, G. N. (2014). Re-examining the fluctuations in language-in-education policies in post-independence Ghana. *Multilingual Education, 4*, 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13616-014-0012-3

Bagwasi, M. M. (2016). A critique of Botswana's language policy from a translanguaging perspective. *Current Issues in Language Planning*. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2016.1246840.

Baker, C. (2011). *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism*. Multilingual Matters.

Baynham, M. & Lee, T. K. (2019). *Translation and Translanguaging*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge University Press.

Canals, L. (2021). Multimodality and translanguaging in negotiation of meaning. *Foreign Language Annals*, 1-24. https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12547

Cenoz, J. & Gorter, D. (2017). Minority languages and sustainable translanguaging: Threat or opportunity? *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 38*(10), 902-912. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2017.1284855

Creese, A. & Blackledge, A. (2010). Translanguaging in the bilingual classroom: A pedagogy for learning and teaching? *Modern Language Journal, 94*. 103-115. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2009.00986.x

Davidson, C. (2009). Transcription: Imperatives for Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 8*(2), 35-52. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690900800206

Fraenkel, R. J. & Wallen, N. E. (2000). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (4th ed.). McGraw-Hill.

García, O. (2011). Educating New York's bilingual children: constructing a future from the past.

International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 14(2), 133-153. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2010.539670

García, O. & Leiva, C. (2014). Theorizing and Enacting Translanguaging for Social Justice. In A. Blackledge & A. Creese (Eds.), *Heteroglossia as Practice and Pedagogy* (pp. 199-216).

García, O. & Wei, L. (2014). *Translanguaging: Language, bilingualism, and education*. Palgrave Macmillan.

García, O. & Kleyn, T. (2016). A translanguaging educational project. In O. García & T. Kleyn (Eds.), *Translanguaging with multilingual students: Learning from classroom moments* (pp. 34-54). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Gee, J. P. (1999). *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and method*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Greeff, M. (2005). Information collection: Interviewing. In A.S. de Vos, H. Strydom, C.B. Fouché, & C.S.L. Delport (Eds.), *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions* (3rd ed., pp. 286-313). Van Schaik Publishers.

Hedger, R. & Wicaksono, R. (2015). Learning, Teaching and Assessment in Multilingual Classrooms. In J. Angouri, T. Harrison, S. Schnurr, & S. Wharton (Eds.), *Learning, Working and Communicating in a Global Context Proceedings of the 47th Annual Meeting of the British Association for Applied Linguistics 4-6 September 2014 University of Warwick, Coventry* (pp. 53-65). Scitsiugnil Press.

Hawkins, R. M. (2020). Toward critical cosmopolitanism: Transmodal transnational engagements of youth. In E. Moore, J. Bradley, & J. Simpson (Eds.), *Translanguaging as Transformation: The Collaborative Construction of New Linguistic Realities* (pp. 23-40). Multilingual Matters.

Hua, Z., Wei, L., & Lyons, A. (2017). Polish shop(ping) as Translanguaging Space. *Social Semiotics, 27*(4), 411-433. https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2017.1334390.

Jones, B. & Lewis, G. (2014). Language arrangements within bilingual education. In E. M. Thomas & I. Mennen (Eds.), *Advances in the Study of bilingualism*. Multilingual Matters.

Kramsch, C. (2015). Applied linguistics: A theory of the practice. *Applied Linguistics, 36*(4), 454-465. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amv039

Lewis, G., Jones, B., & Baker, C. (2012). Translanguaging: Origins and development from school to street and beyond. *Educational Research and Evaluation, 18*(7), 641-654. https://doi.org/10.1080/13803611.2012.718488

Mann, S. (2011). A critical review of qualitative interviews in applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics, 32*(1), 6-24. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amq043

Maturana, H. & Varela, F. (1998). *The Tree of Knowledge: The Biological Roots of Human Understanding*. Shambhala/New Science Library.

Pennycook, A. (2010). *Language as local practice*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Scollon, R. (2001). *Mediated Discourse: The nexus of practice*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Scollon, R. & Scollon, S. W. (2004). *Nexus Analysis: Discourse and the emerging Internet*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Wei, L. (2018). Translanguaging as a practical theory of language. *Applied Linguistics, 39*(1), 9-30. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amx039

Yevudey, E. (2015). Translanguaging as a language contact phenomenon in the classroom in Ghana: Pedagogic relevance and perceptions. In J. Angouri, T. Harrison, S. Schnurr, & S. Wharton (Eds.), *Learning, Working and Communicating in a Global Context Proceedings of the 47th Annual Meeting of the British Association for Applied Linguistics 4-6 September 2014 University of Warwick, Coventry* (pp. 259-270). Scitsiugnil Press.

UNESCO. (1953). The use of vernacular languages in education. Report of the UNESCO Meeting of Specialists (1951). *Monograph on Fundamental Education* VII. Paris: UNESCO.