

**THE PEDAGOGIC RELEVANCE
OF CODESWITCHING IN THE CLASSROOM:
INSIGHTS FROM EWE-ENGLISH CODESWITCHING IN
GHANA**

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ABSTRACT

Codeswitching as a code choice in the classroom has been a debatable issue among scholars interested in language of education, especially in Africa. Some studies promote the exclusive use of the L2 ‘target language’ in the classroom, while other studies recommend a bilingual mode of communication such as codeswitching. Against this backdrop, this research explores the pedagogic functions of codeswitching patterns in both Ewe (L1) and English (L2) primary school lessons. The current language policy of education in Ghana, under which the classrooms being observed operate, is a bilingual literacy programme, NALAP, which stipulates that the mother tongue of the pupils should be used as a medium of instruction while English is introduced as a second language with a transition to English medium of instruction from grade 4 onwards. The data for the research are recordings of classroom discourse, responses to questionnaire surveys and interviews conducted in the Volta Region of Ghana. This paper presents both a qualitative analysis of the data, which reveals that teachers and pupils use intersentential and intrasentential codeswitching to perform various functions in their classroom interactions, and a quantitative analysis of the data, which shows that teachers have predominantly positive attitudes towards codeswitching. Based on these results, it is argued that codeswitching between Ewe and English within the lessons enabled students to understand concepts in both languages and to participate actively during lessons.

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1. Introduction

Codeswitching is encountered more and more frequently in Ghana. In particular, using two or more languages concurrently within the same conversation by like-bilinguals is on the rise due to high mobility of and contact between people. This makes codeswitching an unavoidable code choice, especially in multilingual nations or communities (Liu 2010). The phenomenon of codeswitching generally refers to the use of two or more languages within a given interaction. Code, as used in this paper,

refers to “any kind of system that two or more people employ for communication” (Wardhaugh 2010:84). Wardhaugh (2010) explains that this term is a more neutral term than other related terms such as dialect, language, style, pidgin and creole, which usually attract some emotional attachments. The term code is therefore used to refer to any form of linguistic patterns that are used in the classrooms observed in this study.

Ghana is a multilingual country having about 79 indigenous languages (Lewis 2009) and English as the official language. Nine of these indigenous languages are officially acknowledged in the country’s constitution and receive government support: Akan, Dagaare, Dangme, Dagbane, Ewe, Gonja, Ga, Kasem and Nzema. Akan has three dialects Asante-Twi, Fante and Akwapem-Twi, which all have standard official orthographies plus a fourth one, the Unified Akan Orthography, which however seems little used or taught. Over the years, the policy of Ghana on the language of education especially for the lower primary/grade can be characterized as a succession of multiple, sometimes conflicting, decisions (Owu-Ewie 2006:76). Currently, the language policy in operation, which is employed in the classrooms observed in this research, is called the National Literacy Acceleration Program (NALAP). This policy is a bilingual literacy programme, which stipulates that Ghanaian languages should be used as the medium of instruction at the kindergarten and the lower primary levels (primary 1-3) with a transition to English-only medium of instruction from primary 4 onwards (Primary Teacher’s Guide 2008). However, there is provision for English to be used where necessary in primary 1-3. One important feature of NALAP, which is stated in a handout on the programme, is that the Ghanaian language-teaching period and the English language-teaching period have been merged into what is called the Language and Literacy period. The Language and Literacy period has two sessions. During the first session of the lesson, the teachers teach a given topic in the Ghanaian language, in this case Ewe, and during the second part of the lesson, they treat the same topic in English. What is noticeable in the classes, however, is that the two languages are not used exclusively, as the teachers and the pupils use either of the languages where necessary. This flexibility in language use pattern leads to codeswitching the classrooms.

In the literature, the use of CS in the classroom context as a medium of interaction is a debatable concern among scholars interested in language of education and bilingual education. In a paper based on second language (L2) instruction, Lightbown (2001:598-9) raises these concerns. Firstly, the paper indicates that, among other things, time and exposure of an L2 learner to the language is a prerequisite for achieving competence and that “only students who are exceptionally gifted or motivated or who have out-of-school exposure acquire the ability to use English effectively.” From this perspective, the paper indicates that early exposure will facilitate the acquisition of the L2. Secondly, Lightbown (2001) raises the concern

that developing of the first language (L1) of the speakers while introducing the L2 is also prudent. These two points of view reflect the debates on the use of L1 in L2 context, and more specifically on the use of CS in the classroom.

Against this backdrop, this paper explores two research questions. First, what are the pedagogic functions of codeswitching in the classroom interaction between teachers and pupils? Secondly, what are the attitudes of teachers towards codeswitching in the classroom, and how do these attitudes reflect in their classroom language use? To explore these research questions, the remainder of the paper constitutes a review of literature on classroom codeswitching in Africa, the methodology and the conceptual framework adopted for the data collection and analysis respectively, presentation of results and conclusion.

2. Codeswitching in the Classroom in Africa

The phenomenon of codeswitching in the classroom in post-colonial settings, for example in Africa, has been the subject of scholarly attention for many years. For example, Clegg and Afitska (2011) present an overview of studies that assess the pedagogic relevance of teaching and learning in two languages in African classrooms. They show that language practices such as codeswitching in the classroom in sub-Saharan Africa is a controversial issue as authorities often condemn its use and teachers do not accept its use in the classroom. Despite these negative attitudes, however, Clegg and Afitska (2011:71) show that codeswitching plays important pedagogic roles in the classroom. Codeswitching is useful for explaining and elaborating on concepts, increasing classroom participation, establishing good classroom relationships, ensuring the smooth running of the lesson, and making connections with the local culture of learners. The authors therefore recommend teacher-education systems that would factor in the importance of bilingual pedagogy and various language practices that teachers could adopt to facilitate pupils' understanding and participation in the classroom.

Similarly, based on ethnographic study, Arthur (1996) investigates the interactions between teachers and pupils in standard (grade) six classes in two primary schools in northeastern Botswana. The policy under which the schools operate prescribes the use of Setswana, which is the national language, from lower school to standard 3 with a transition to English medium of instruction from standard 4. Arthur (1996) indicates that teachers use codeswitching to encourage participation by pupils. Codeswitching by pupils, on the other hand, is not always an accepted code in the classroom as the policy stipulates English as the only medium of instruction. For example, in a transcript on interaction between a teacher and pupils in a science lesson, the teacher asks a question switching from English to Setswana. The teacher, however, rejects a pupil's answer in Setswana. Although teachers in these classrooms use codeswitching

to achieve certain pedagogic goals, they “are ambivalent in their views of code switching and reluctant or even ashamed to admit to its part in their classroom practice” (Arthur 1996:21). These differences between what is actually done, i.e. using codeswitching in the classroom context to achieve certain teaching and learning goals, and what is said to be done, i.e. on the perceptions of students and teachers towards codeswitching, show a contradiction. Similar types of contradictions are encountered elsewhere. Swigart (1992) reveals that pervasive use of codeswitching among speakers of Wolof and French in Dakar, Senegal is contrary to their negative attitudes towards Wolof-French codeswitching.

In Ghana, codeswitching in day-to-day interactions in general and its use in the classroom in particular has been studied since the 1970s. Forson (1979:61) indicates that codeswitching was not a code choice in Ghana until after the early 1950s when English was introduced as the medium of instruction in the elementary schools. Working on Akan-English codeswitching, Forson (1979:123) records that during meetings of bilingual Akan and English speakers “[a]ny slip into codeswitching was an occasion for spontaneous giggling, the speaker usually finding himself a participant in the ridiculing.” Over all these years, attitudes towards codeswitching have changed. Recent research, for example Amuzu (In press) and Yevudey (2012a), acknowledge that codeswitching in Ghana has become an expected code choice as its normality and acceptability has increased among bilinguals and multilinguals. It is encountered in domains such as on radio and television, and in churches and classrooms. These, therefore, signal what Myers-Scotton (1983) refers to as marked and unmarked code choices. Whereas codeswitching was a marked code in the early 1950s, it has become an unmarked code among recent bilinguals (cf. Amuzu 2012).

A number of studies show that teachers and pupils employ codeswitching during lessons to achieve learning and teaching goals in the classroom (Opoku-Amankwa & Brew-Hammond 2011, Adjei 2010, Ezuh 2008). In a research based on Ewe-English codeswitching in a rural primary school, Adjei (2010) presents three codeswitching patterns used by teachers: intrasentential, intersentential and repetitive. Intrasentential codeswitching involves mixing two or more languages within the same sentence while intersentential codeswitching refers to switching at sentence boundaries. The third type of codeswitching, which the author refers to as repetitive intersentential codeswitching (RIC), involves the repetition of the same sentence in one language into another. Teachers employ repetitive intersentential codeswitching due to the pupils’ low comprehension of concepts introduced in the L2 (English) by translating the same ideas into the L1 (Ewe) (Adjei 2010:24). This type of translation is necessitated by low participation by pupils when only English is used. Adjei (2010) indicates that teachers have positive attitudes towards codeswitching as they believe it is the code choice that will increase pupils’ understanding during lessons.

Based on a study conducted in two senior high schools in Ghana, Ezuh (2008) investigates the effectiveness of the use of codeswitching as a medium of instruction in the classroom. To point out, the pattern of codeswitching referred to in that work is when both English and the dominant L1 are used in explaining difficult concepts and terminologies to facilitate students' understanding and participation. In exploring the mode of instruction that facilitates the students' academic performance, Ezuh postulates that the students from the two schools performed better when they were taught via codeswitching whereas their performances declined when taught using English-only medium of instruction. In a response to a questionnaire survey, both teachers and pupils have positive attitudes towards codeswitching in the classroom and encouraged its adoption as a medium of instruction. Based on these findings, the author argues that teachers over the years have been using codeswitching as a medium of instruction "illegally", thus using code choice that is contrary to what the policy stipulates, to facilitate teaching and learning process, and that what is required now is to have "a scientific research" to authenticate its use. This conclusion reflects Arthur and Martin's (2006) argument that the use of codeswitching in the classroom should be viewed as a "teachable pedagogic resource". The implication is that teachers should be introduced to the strategic use of codeswitching in the classroom; therefore, it should be incorporated into the teacher-training curriculum.

Likewise, Amekor (2009) studies the use of codeswitching in the classroom in selected schools in the Keta Municipal and Akatsi District in the Volta Region, Ghana. The research aimed, among other things, to explore the language use patterns in classroom settings where English is the expected code choice, and the motivations behind any code choice in those classrooms. Presenting evidence from recorded data and questionnaire surveys, the author indicates that all the classrooms were characterized by pervasive use of codeswitching. The teachers indicated that they used codeswitching because they judged their students' command of English to be insufficient for it to be used as the sole medium of instruction. But it is not just the students who do not have a good command of English. Amekor (2009:79), further shows that some of the teachers are also less proficient in English and that also contributed to the use of codeswitching in the classroom. As codeswitching seems to be an unavoidable code choice in the classroom, Amekor (2009) suggests that teachers should be introduced to the concept of codeswitching to enable them to know the types that exist and which of them is appropriate to enhance both content and language acquisition.

Finally, Brew-Daniels (2011) delves into the code choices of teacher trainees from selected Colleges of Education in the Ashanti Region of Ghana via audio recordings of classroom interactions, questionnaire surveys, and interviews in order to ascertain their language use patterns and their effects on students' performances. In view of the

data, the author points out that there is a pervasive use of codeswitching inside and outside the classroom by these teacher trainees. The teachers indicated that they code switch in the classroom to facilitate pupils understanding and participation, and also “to cover up for their inability to express themselves comprehensively in one language” (Brew-Daniels 2011:50). Ascertaining the academic performance of the students per the language choice, the teacher trainees in the research were asked to teach one lesson using English-only medium of instruction and another lesson alternating between English and Twi, which is the pupils’ mother tongue. In each of these cases, the author asked the teachers to conduct a class test and record the marks. Conducting a comparative analysis of the class tests, Brew-Daniels (2011) indicates that the students performed better when taught in Twi-English codeswitching, whereas there is a decline in performance when English only was used. Therefore, the author concluded that codeswitching in the classroom does not necessarily cause “a blockage or deficiency in learning a language”, but on the contrary, as it fosters pupils performances. However, Brew-Daniels cautioned that it should be used sparingly as its pervasive use might have effect on the students’ competence in the languages.

In conclusion, although some research recommends that codeswitching should be discouraged in the classroom, most studies suggest that it can play an important role in the teaching and learning processes as pupils’ participation and understanding may increase when they are free to use the language(s) that are most familiar to them. In sum, issues pertaining to attitudes and the actual use of codeswitching by teachers and pupils have been some of the main concerns of codeswitching research.

This present study aims to contribute to the existing discussions on the relevance of the use of pupils’ L1 in fostering both L2 acquisition and content comprehension by exploring the language mode of teachers and pupils in lower primary (grades) 1-3 based on the functions of codeswitching in the classrooms. The paper also looks at the attitude of teachers towards codeswitching in the classroom, and unravels the pedagogic relevance of codeswitching in the classroom and how its use facilitates pupils’ understanding and participation.

3. Conceptual Framework

Drawing insights from the findings above on the functions of codeswitching in the classroom, this work explores the functions that codeswitching plays in both Ewe and English lessons and illustrates how these functions compare in other classroom domains investigated in the literature. Furthermore, the work explores the language mode of teachers and pupils during Ewe and English lessons based on the transcripts of the classroom recordings, in addition to the interviews and the questionnaires. As Grosjean (1982; 1998; 2001; 2013) indicates, studies on language mode in bilingual research plays an important role in understanding how much one of the languages of

bilinguals is used over another, and additionally how the two languages are used equally. Language mode refers to “the state of activation of the bilingual’s languages and language processing mechanisms at a given point in time” (Grosjean 2001:3).

The state of activation of two languages is said to be in a continuum during an interaction. On this continuum, bilinguals may be in monolingual mode, intermediate mode or bilingual mode. For example, as illustrated in Grosjean (1998:136-7), if language A and language B are the linguistic repertoire of a bilingual, the speaker may be in a monolingual mode if talking to a speaker who is a monolingual in for example language A, and/or when the topic and the situation of the interaction require only the use of A. In an intermediate mode, language A is actively used with some amount of activation of language B. Bilinguals are said to be in this mode when one of the interlocutors does not want to use, for example language B while communicating in language A or with speakers who have less proficiency in language B. The bilingual mode is reached when speakers interact with like bilinguals and with whom they feel comfortable mixing the two languages. The identification of the language mode of bilingual(s) is based on “the participants within the interaction, the situation, the form and content of the message, and the functions of the language act” (Grosjean 2001:5). This type of understanding of bilingual language processing is one of the least concerns in bilingual research and more specifically on the use of codeswitching in the classroom. In this work, the participants and the situations are briefly discussed, as well as the form and content of the message. The main focus is on the function of the language act in reference to the theoretical framework.

4. Methodology

As emphasized in Silverman (2010:64), multiple methods help to provide multiple perspectives from which a phenomenon can be explored. Therefore, multiple methods were adopted for this work in exploring different aspects of codeswitching phenomenon. These include observation through recordings of classroom interactions, interviews and questionnaire surveys. The classroom recordings provide insights into the types of codeswitching that are used in the classrooms. The interviews and questionnaire surveys provide a background to explain the various language use patterns in the classrooms and on attitudes of teachers towards codeswitching.

Two mission schools were selected in the Ho township of the Volta Region of Ghana. Ho township was chosen because this is one of the towns where Ewe is predominately spoken, and both Ewe and English are used in schools as mediums of instruction as well as subjects of study. The data sets for the work consist of classroom recordings of 4 teachers with an average total of 20 pupils per teacher. For ethical considerations and anonymity, the two schools are referred to here as School A and School B. In school A, three classroom recordings were made in addition to three

interviews with the teachers who participated in the classroom data collection and one interview with the head of school. This head of school was the head of school for school B before being transferred to School A. From this background, the interview with this head of school provides information that reflects the sociolinguistic situation in the classroom in the two schools. Sixteen questionnaires have also been distributed to teachers in this school.

In school B, two classrooms were recorded, however, one of the data sets was not analysed for this paper, as the lesson was a revision of a previous lesson and therefore there was no active interaction between the teacher and the pupils. In addition, interviews were conducted with two teachers, and three questionnaires were returned during the questionnaire survey. There was no opportunity to interview the head of this school due to work schedules. In total, there were 05:43:11 hours of classroom recordings and interviews and the corpus based on the transcripts consist of 21,180 words, and 19 questionnaires. The classrooms are named randomly as classroom 1-4 for the purposes of analysis. For example, T1, Ps 1 and P 1 refer to the teacher, the pupils and a pupil respectively in classroom 1.

5. The Function of the Language Act: The use of intersentential and intrasentential codeswitches in the classrooms

Within the classroom interactions, teachers and pupils use intersentential and intrasentential codeswitching to fulfill teaching and learning goals. Generally, intersentential codeswitching refers to the mixing of two or more languages at sentence boundaries. Intrasentential codeswitching refers to the use of words or phrasal constituents from one language into another within a sentence. During Ewe and English lessons, teachers and pupils use codeswitching to perform various functions. Below are some of the functions identified from the classroom interactions.

Function 1: Explanation

The teachers used various types of codeswitching to explain questions or statements that they felt were incomprehensible to pupils. Example 1 is an extract from an interaction in classroom 2 between the teacher and the pupils. The teacher was teaching a lesson on road safety using monolingual English during the English session of the lesson, and during the lesson the teacher directed a question to the pupils on what they would do when they want to cross the road. In response, the pupils provided different answers such as “Red means stop” (line 132) and “Yellow is get ready” (line 134). When the teacher realised that the pupils did not understand the question in English, she switched to Ewe using intersentential codeswitching (line 133) and intrasentential codeswitching (line 135) in order to explain the question to them. This

interaction draws our attention to two main pedagogic findings. First, the teacher, although keen to use unilingual English, recognizes the importance of the L1 (Ewe) for explaining incomprehensible concepts to the pupils. Secondly, the pupils' inability to provide the correct answer could be attributed to the restricted language use pattern in the classroom, where the teacher expects the pupils to answer in only English. The English-only medium of instruction adopted by this teacher and the outcome suggests that a monolingual mode of instruction, especially during English lessons, does not aid pupils' understanding and participation, and as such less activation of the pupils' L1 leads to the recitation of English words and sentences as opposed to understanding of the concepts. In other words, this emphasizes the point that the bilingual mode of instruction, i.e. the use of both Ewe and English, in a form of codeswitching will help in facilitating pupils understanding and participation. Equally, there will be effective contribution from the pupils when they are free to use the language they know better.

*Example 1: Use of codeswitching for explanation during English lessons.
(Classroom 2)*

132 P.2: Red means stop

133 T.2: Red means stop

Mebede, nuka woe awɔ le emɔdzi be evu mafowo o? (*I say that, what things will you do on the road so that you don't get knock down by car?*)

What will you do on the road when you stand by the road side and you want to cross? What will you do? Yes

134 P.2: Yellow is get ready

135 T.2: I know yellow is get ready

Mebede (*I say that*), when you stand by the road side and want to cross the road, you look at your left first, then you look at your right, look at your left again before you cross the road. Ok, ɛ.

136 P.2: Yes

137 T.2: you can't look at the right then you cross, No.

When you look at your left and you look at your right, a car can be coming from your left so you look at your left again before you cross the road.

Ok, what will you do to be saved, what will you do to be saved? When somebody is on the road, what will you do to be saved when crossing the road?

You will look both ways when crossing the road.

You will look both ways when crossing the road, you will look both ways when crossing the road.

What will you do to be saved on the road? You will look both ways when crossing the road.

What will you do when crossing the road?

138 P.2: You will look both ways when you cross the road.

139 T.2: ahã, what will you do to be saved when crossing the road?

What will you do? Yes (*Teacher calls on another pupil to answer.*)

140 P.2: I will see both ways when crossing the road

An interview with this teacher presents insights into her strict monolingual language use during the lesson. When asked whether she uses codeswitching during lessons, she answered:

(...) Not mixed up per-se. When it is lesson for Ewe then we use Ewe throughout. When it is English then you use it throughout. Not mixing it. (...) mmhh. At times if you don't know and you mix it you confuse the children. (...) but when it is Ewe, use Ewe throughout. Anything that you will say, it should be in Ewe. (...). So when it is time for Ewe, teach Ewe throughout you don't mix it with English and when it is time for English too then you take the English one. You don't mix it unless maybe you asked a question in English and the child will answer in Ewe. At times, it does happen. When it is answered in Ewe, you will say it to the child in English again for him or her to repeat it after you then she will pick it.

The above classroom interaction and the interview also show how there are parallels between what teachers say they do and what they actually do.

Function 2: Introduction of English lessons

On a typical day for lessons on Language and Literacy, as explained earlier, teachers take the first half of the classes in Ewe then the second half in English. However, the languages are usually not used exclusively as teachers and pupils use either of the languages where necessary. For instance, codeswitching between Ewe and English is used at the transition point of the lessons from Ewe to English including both intrasentential and intersentential codeswitching. This trend surfaced in all the four classrooms observed. The language mode of the teachers and the pupils in this type of classroom interaction may be said to move across a continuum from a bilingual mode to an intermediate mode then to a monolingual mode. For example, in classroom 3 as in example 2 below, the teacher ended the Ewe part of the lesson in monolingual Ewe and introduced the English lesson initially in monolingual Ewe (line 364). She then switched using intersentential codeswitching (line 366) by repeating the same

sentence from Ewe in English. The rest of the classroom discourse went on in English with codeswitching to Ewe where necessary.

Example 2: Using codeswitching at the transition point of the lesson. (Classroom 3)

- | | | | |
|-----|------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 361 | P.3: | Sukuviawo zi ɔɔɔoe. | The pupils kept quiet. |
| 362 | T.3: | Sukuviawo zi ɔɔɔoe. Mhh | The pupils kept quiet. Mhh |
| 363 | P.3: | Wonɔ anyi. | They sat down. |

Transition from Ewe to English: Lesson on the same topic as discussed in Ewe.

- | | | | |
|-----|-------|--|---|
| 364 | T.3: | Eye wonɔ anyi kpoo. Enyo, ke miayi ɔe Yevugbeme tɔ dzi. Emekɔ-a? Miatso. | And they sat down quietly. It is good, so we will continue with the English part. Is that clear? Lets stand up. |
| 365 | Ps.3: | <i>(Pupils stood up.)</i> | |
| 366 | T.3: | Yevugbe me nyaka woe miede dzesi le efima eyike wonye gbededewo? The English words that we identify over there as commands. Give me some words. | What English words did we identify there that are commands? The English words that we identify over there as commands. Give me some words. |
| 367 | P.3: | Shout! | |
| 368 | T.3: | Shout! Fine, give her a hand | |
| 369 | Ps.3: | <i>(Pupils clapped for their colleague.)</i> | |
| 370 | T.3: | T.3: Another one, [name] | |
| 371 | P.3: | Quiet! | |

Function 3: Correction of pupils

Additionally, codeswitching was used to correct pupils when they provided incorrect answers. Example 3 is an extract from an English lesson in classroom 4. During this part of the classroom discussion, pupils were asked to provide examples of words that had the orthographic letter ‘u’ in them. In line 457, a pupil mentioned “pot” as an example. In an attempt to correct the pupil, the teacher switched back and forth from Ewe to English. The teacher, with great displeasure, asked the pupil whether s/he had heard any ‘u’ sound in the word “pot” and asked the pupil not to behave foolishly. In this classroom, both the teacher and the pupils were in a bilingual mode as both Ewe and English were activated, and both parties were free to use any of the two languages. During an interview, this teacher indicated that due to low proficiency of

the pupils in English she adopts bilingual mode of instruction to facilitate effective communication.

Example 3: Use of codeswitching to correct pupils. (Classroom 4)

- 453 T.4: ‘Run’ is on the board. ‘Run’ is on the board. Mhh, ‘but’ is one. ‘But’. So all these words: ‘gun, hut, hunter, hungry, fun, sun, sunlight, but’; they all have the ‘u’ with what, the ‘a’ sound. ‘u’ with ‘a’ sound. Now, let’s come to the ‘u’ sound. They gave examples of what, ‘flute’ and ‘broom’. Yes, give me more examples. We can have ‘push’, /u/, /u/. /u/-‘push’, ‘pull’, ‘pull’. Yes.
- 454 P.4: Put.
- 455 T.4: “Put. Fine, yes. Mhh
- 456 P.4: Pot
- 457 T.4: ehhh, **wóbe** /u/ sound, **wobe** ‘pot’, **wose** /u/ *de le efima? Meganɔanyi nano asokum o. Yes.*
(ehhh, they said /u/ sound, you said ‘pot’. Did you hear any /u/ there? Do not be acting foolishly.)
- 458 P.4: Boot.

Function 4: For acknowledgement and calling on pupils

During Ewe lessons, teachers used intrasentential codeswitches from English in the form of tags. Some of these English tags were used to acknowledge pupils or to call on them to respond to class discussions. The example 4 below presents a section of the Ewe lesson in classroom 4 where the English tag form *fine* in line 87 is used to acknowledge pupils’ response. In the same line and line 93, the teacher used another English tag form *yes [name]* in order to call pupils to answer questions. In all the four classrooms, pupils got to know it was their turn to talk in class when the tag form *yes* or *yes* in addition to the name of the pupil was used. These tag forms were used in both Ewe and English lessons. However, they were used as codeswitches during Ewe lessons. The activation of English in forms of these tags during Ewe lessons went unnoticed as they formed part of active vocabulary of the classroom interaction.

Example 4: Use of intrasentential codeswitching in form of tag switches for acknowledgement and to call on pupils (Classroom 4)

- | | | | |
|----|------|--|--|
| 85 | T.4: | Ame sia ame se-a? | Has everybody heard it? |
| 86 | Ps.4 | Miɖeku ee. | Yes please! |
| 87 | T.4: | <u>Fine</u>, fífia miakpɔ ekpea dzi ɖa. | <u>Fine</u> , now look on the board. What |

		Nya gbãtɔ be leke? Mhh, yes[name of pupil]	is the first word saying? Mhh, <u>yes</u> [name of pupil]
88	P.4:	Baba nawo	Sorry for you.
89	T.4:	Baba nawo. Woagblɛ mase ɔa.	Sorry for you. Say it to my hearing.
90	Ps.4	Baba nawo.	Sorry for you.
91	T.4:	Baba nawo.	Sorry for you
92	Ps.4	Baba nawo.	Sorry for you
93	T.4:	Xekayie miedona baba na ame? Xekayie agblɔ na nɔviwo be baba nawo? Xe ka yie? Yes.	When do we say sorry to someone? When would you tell you sibling sorry for you? When? <u>Yes.</u>
94	P.4:	Ne meɔo aɔ nɔvinye dzi magblɔ ne be baba nawo.	When I step on my sibling I will him/her sorry for you.

Function 5: Repetition of sentences to facilitate understanding and vocabulary acquisition

During some of the English lessons, teachers used codeswitching through translation of English statements or words into Ewe and sometimes back into English. This repetitive codeswitching strategy was used by these teachers to facilitate pupils' understanding and to increase their participation during lessons. An instance of such repetition occurred at the transition point of the lesson from Ewe to English in classroom 1. In this lesson, as illustrated in example 5 below, the teacher, although was expected to use Ewe during this part of the lesson, had introduced the pupils to the English counterparts of Ewe lexicons during the Ewe lesson. In the English lesson, the teacher recapped the English equivalents of the Ewe expressions learnt. As indicated in the introduction, most of the teachers do not use Ewe and English exclusively during the Ewe and English sessions of the Language and Literacy period. They usually use both languages, especially during the Ewe lesson, when introducing the topic. From this perspective, the teacher and the pupils were in their bilingual mode during the classroom discussion. To this extent, the teacher continued using Ewe frequently and in line 260, she drew her own attention to her use of Ewe during the English lesson. This shows the activation of the two codes during classroom interactions.

Example 5: Repetitive codeswitching during English lessons and vocabulary acquisition (Classroom 1)

242 T.1: **Âku, eyeta ne nɔviwo le xaxame** You will die, so when your

- edze be nawɔ nuka?**
- 243 Ps.1: **naɖe tso eme.** brother/sister is in difficulty
you have to do what?
- 244 T.1: **Naɖe le xaxa me. Yoo, akpe.** You should help him/her out.
You should help him/her
from the difficulty. Okay,
thank you.
- 245 *Transition from Ewe to English: Lesson on the same topic as
discussed in Ewe.*
- 246 T.1 **Mie edzi yige le Yevugbe me. Nye duster ɖe? Fifia hafi miele eha ma dzige loo. Miatu agbalē wo. Ne etui ko nade ɖi kpoo alo na de ɖe wo desk me. Nuyi srɔ̃ge miele le Yevugbeme-a fe Uegbemetɔ miesrɔ̃ vayi. Miele efe Yevugbemetɔ srɔ̃ge. Tutu afiɣa nam. Va tutu afii.** We will continue in English. Where is my duster? It is now that we are going to sing that song. Let us close the books. When you close it, you should put it down gently or you should put it in your desk. What we are going to study in English, it is the Ewe one we studied earlier. We are going to study the English one. Clean that portion for me. Come and clean here.
- 247 *(The class is getting ready for the English part of the lesson.)*
- 248 T.1 *(Bell rang)* Assembly **hã?** It is assembly?
- 249 Ps.1: Ao loo It isn't
- 250 T.1: **Ahã, mietrɔ va bubu gbɔ. Commands, wogblɔe** Okey, we turn to another one. Commands, say it
- 251 Ps.1: Commands
- 252 T.1: Commands
- 253 Ps.1: Commands
- 254 T.1: and instructions
- 255 Ps.1: and instructions
- 256 T.1: Commands and instructions
- 257 Ps.1: Commands and instructions.
- 258 T.1: **mhh, miesrɔ̃ gbedɔ̃ɖiwo kple afɔ̃ɖofefiafiawo. Efe Yevugbeme tɔ yenye eya. Commands, gbedɔ̃ɖiwo, and instructions, kple** Mhh, we learnt commands and instructuions. Its English one is this one. Commands, commands, and instructions, and instructions. Instructions-s are instructions. Is

- afɔdɔfɛfiawo.** Instructions- that understood?
wo nye afɔdɔfɛfiawo. Eme
kɔ-a?
- 259 Ps.1: **Miɖeku ɛɛ** **Yes please.**
- 260 T.1: **Yoo, gbeɖiɖiawoa...aa** **Okey, commands..aa I have come**
megava vɛgbeme. Commands, **back to Ewe.** Commands, when
 when they tell you something they tell you something you will
 you will obey, ɛɛ. obey, **okey.**
- 261 Ps.1: Yes

6. Attitudes: Attitudes of primary school teachers toward codeswitching in the classroom

In addition to observations via classroom recordings, questionnaire surveys and interviews were used to explore the attitudes of primary school teachers toward codeswitching in the classroom. The age range of the teachers was from 25 to above 50 years, with 95% being females and 5% male. Table 1 below presents the various classes the teachers teach, which shows a representation from most of the primary classes.

Table 1: Classes taught by the teachers

Classes	Number of respondents	Percentage %
Primary (P) 1	4	21
P2	5	27
P3	3	16
P4	3	16
P5	2	10
P6	0	0
(Others)	2	10
KG		
Total	19	100

The teachers were asked, as shown in table 2 below, whether they would encourage codeswitching in the classroom. The responses showed that 73% of the teachers expressed encouragement while 27% discouraged its use. The quotes below present some of the comments put forward by teachers who encourage its use:

“All the ability groups will be able to understand what is being taught.”

“It is widely accepted that children learn to read better in their mother tongue which is familiar to them, when this concept has been established they learn to read in the second language.”

Teachers who did not encourage its use indicated that,

“It will cause the pupils to relax in making effort to understand the English language.”

“It will not help pupils to use the right expressions for English and Ewe.”

“It should be done only at the lower primary.”

The points put forward by the teachers who encourage codeswitching indicate that the use of codeswitching will help in catering for all levels of learners in the classroom. However, teachers who do not encourage its use point out that codeswitching in the classroom will make pupils feel reluctant to make efforts to learn the English language and also that its use should be limited to the lower primary schools only.

Table 2: Do you think that mixing Ewe and English expressions during lessons should be encouraged in schools?

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage %
Yes	14	73
No	5	27
No opinion	0	0
Total	19	100

In addition, table 3 below presents details of a quantitative analysis of the questionnaire survey on teachers' perception. The findings reveal that 42% of the teachers had a very positive attitude toward codeswitching while 31% are positive and 11% are uncertain. Also 11% of the teachers feel negative towards it while 5% feel very negative. Overall percentages show that 73% of the teachers felt (very) positive towards codeswitching in the classroom, 16% expressed (very) negative attitude, and 5% were uncertain. An overview of the responses shows that the majority of teachers in these lower primary schools had a positive attitude towards codeswitching.

Table 3: How would you describe your feeling or attitude toward the mixing of expressions from Ewe and English?

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage %
Very positive	8	42
Positive	6	31
Uncertain	2	11
Negative	2	11
Very Negative	1	5
Total	19	100

7. Discussion and Conclusion

This paper set out to explore the pedagogic functions of codeswitching in the classroom based on the interaction between teachers and pupils, and to ascertain the attitude of teachers towards codeswitching and how it reflects in their classroom language use. The analysis of the classroom data, the interviews and the questionnaires reveal that teachers and pupils use intersentential and intrasentential codeswitching in their classroom interactions to perform certain teaching and learning functions. The pedagogic functions include explanation of concepts, introduction of English lessons, correction of pupils, acknowledgement and calling on pupils, and for facilitating understanding and vocabulary acquisition. These pedagogic functions of codeswitching in these classrooms show that codeswitching is an important tool in language and content acquisition (Ncoko et al. 2000). Equally, the attitudes of the teachers towards codeswitching in the classroom are predominantly positive, however, teachers who have a negative attitude towards it avoid using it in the classroom to some extent.

The amount of codeswitching, the type of vocabulary needed, the topic and the languages used play a role when describing the language behaviour of bilinguals. There is a higher occurrence of English switches during Ewe lessons than Ewe switches during English lessons. Thus, English is more highly activated during Ewe lessons than Ewe is activated during English lessons. This is due to the high occurrence of vocabulary drills during Ewe lessons. In addition, the use of codeswitching by speakers within an interactive event may be conditioned by lexical need and this may present the stage that they are at on the language mode continuum (Grosjean 2001). Codeswitching in these classrooms may not be associated with lack of competence or lexical need (cf. Asilevi 1990), but more with speakers' delay in accessing some native Ewe words that are not frequently used, for example

mometsofeɸiadzesi 'zebra crossing', during an ongoing interaction (Amuzu 2005). In Romylyn's (2009) terms, codeswitching in these classrooms has communicative functions as it helps teachers and pupils to express themselves more easily.

From the classroom interactions, the language mode of the teachers and the pupils may be said to move across the continuum from bilingual mode to intermediate mode then to bilingual mode. For example, in classroom 3, the teacher begins the Ewe lesson using codeswitching and the lesson continued with little use of English, therefore reflecting intermediate mode. English is then reactivated during the vocabulary drills where pupils provide both Ewe and English equivalent of the words they were taught. This same pattern continues in the English lesson. The monolingual mode, however, is rarely the case as teachers and pupils are often free to use the two languages and each of the interlocutors is aware that their interlocutor will comprehend their mixed language (Grosjean 2001). A monolingual mode can be said to be reached during the English lesson in classroom 2, and this leads to pupils' diminished understanding of the lesson. The teacher therefore resorts to the use of intersentential and intrasentential codeswitching to facilitate pupils' understanding. These present two factors: first a change from Ewe as the base language to English, and second a change to a low level of activation of Ewe leads to less comprehension of concepts by the pupils (Grosjean 2001:4). In other words, pupils understanding and participation increases when Ewe and English are activated while there is less understanding when only English is activated. This finding on the use of language and its effect on pupils understanding and participation is reflected in other studies such as Brew-Daniels (2011), Amekor (2009), Ezuh (2008), Arthur and Martin (2006). These studies also show that pupils understanding and participation as well as their academic performance are enhanced when they are taught bilingually, whereas there is a decline when they are taught in only the target language, English.

Furthermore, codeswitching within these classrooms has functional relevance (Matras 2009:101). The uses of intersentential and intrasentential codeswitching in these classrooms occur in various forms to perform certain functions. Intersentential codeswitching occurs in the form of repetition of the same sentence or idea in both Ewe and English for the purposes of explaining concepts for pupils' understanding and participation (see for example Function 2 line 366). Similar patterns of repetition of the same sentence are used when introducing English lesson after the end of the Ewe lesson. Repetitive use of sentences from two languages in juxtaposition is referred to as repetitive intersentential codeswitching (RIC) (Adjei 2010:23). Adjei (2010) indicates that teachers adopt repetitive use of intersentential codeswitching during lessons to facilitate pupils understanding and participation. There are, however, intersentential codeswitches from Ewe and English in juxtaposition that express different or similar concepts (see for example Function 1 line 133). Intersentential

codeswitching of these types are referred to in this work as non-repetitive intersentential codeswitching (NIC). Non-repetitive intersentential codeswitching is also used in explaining concepts in order to facilitate pupils' understanding and participation. Intrasentential codeswitches in the classroom data are mainly used to perform functions such as vocabulary drills, acknowledgment of pupils, and calling on pupils to contribute to classroom discussions.

Finally, outcomes of attitudinal studies towards codeswitching are changing. Attitudes towards codeswitching as recounted in the early 1950s to 1970s have been negative (e.g. Forson 1979). However, current trends of attitudes are more positive (e.g. Asare-Nyarko 2012). The quantitative and qualitative analyses of the questionnaire and the interview responses do not point to outright acceptance or rejection of codeswitching use in the classrooms. As also noted in Romylyn (2009), the attitudes of the teachers towards codeswitching can be described in terms of agreement, disagreement and conditional use. In terms of agreement, teachers indicate that codeswitching is an important medium of interaction as it fosters understanding and participation of pupils, and that the principle of literacy is from the known to the unknown. Attitudes of disagreement are on the grounds that the use of codeswitching in the classrooms will not enable pupils to learn the right expressions in both Ewe and English. In addition to this, codeswitching is to be discouraged in the classroom because its use may not encourage pupils to make efforts in learning English. In terms of responses on its conditional use, codeswitching is to be reserved for the lower primary school (grade)1-3 due to low proficiency of pupils in English at these levels. Adopting it as a code choice in the upper primary and beyond is to be limited to explanation of difficult terms. This response on the level at which codeswitching should be adopted describes the form of codeswitching patterns investigated in Ezuh (2008), where the teachers in the Senior High Schools observed in that study adopt codeswitching to explain difficult concepts and terminologies. In general, the attitudes of the teachers, based on the responses, show that majority of teachers in these lower primary schools have positive attitude towards codeswitching.

Lastly, there is a parallel between what teachers say they do and what they actually do, i.e. teachers who are positive towards the use of codeswitching in the classroom use it pervasively, whereas those that encourage monolingual Ewe and monolingual English adhere to that to some extent. This is contrary to what Arthur (1996) finds among teachers in Botswana. Arthur (1996:21) indicates that the teachers in Botswana have negative attitudes towards codeswitching, however, contrary to these attitudes their classroom language practices are characterised by pervasive use of codeswitching.

In conclusion, this study reflects the pedagogic relevance of codeswitching in the classroom and how it can be adopted to meet the classroom language needs. As

equally posited in other studies, for example Brew-Daniels (2011), Clegg and Afitska (2011), Ezuh (2008), Arthur and Martin (2006), codeswitching should be considered as a teachable pedagogic resource, therefore, should be incorporated into teacher training syllabus and teaching methodology in Ghana. By so doing, teacher trainees will have knowledge of what codeswitching is, the types of codeswitching that could be used in the classroom, and the level at which codeswitching can be adopted to enhance teaching and learning. This would enable teachers to use codeswitching more purposefully and systematically in the classroom to achieve teaching and learning goals.

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