



Learning through Translanguaging under Official Prohibition: Evidence from Standard One Classrooms in Rungwe District, Tanzania

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Abstract

Tanzania's policies related to language marginalize nearly 150 Ethnic Community Languages (ECLs) by excluding them from official domains, including formal education, while privileging Kiswahili as the sole nationally sanctioned language in primary education. Despite the rejection, the excluded ethnic community languages are still used unofficially in classrooms due to their inalienability in a phenomenon known as translanguaging. Consequently, this study focused on translanguaging practice and its motivations among pupils in Rungwe, Tanzania. The study purposively selected 48 participants from 4 rural primary schools (8 teachers and 40 learners) through observation and interviews. The study revealed that translanguaging proved quite useful and practical support for teachers and learners in greetings, explaining concepts, drawing attention, defining vocabularies, asking questions, summarizing lessons and dismissing the class. In this light, legalizing translanguaging would maximize its benefits in the teaching-learning process in Tanzania. Developing inclusive policies, procedures and guidelines for the use of these other non-official languages in schools, rather than banning and punishing their users, would maximize the attainment of educational goals, such as critical thinking, high academic performance, inclusivity and high self-esteem among learners.

Keywords: Translanguaging; non-standard varieties; language planning; linguistic imperialism; language politics.

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Introduction

Translanguaging is the ability of multilingual speakers to switch between languages in a seamless way that helps speakers infer meanings, shape experiences and obtain a better awareness and knowledge of the language in use (Park, 2013). Translanguaging is a valuable and useful language practice for multilingual teachers and learners (Woodley & Brown, 2016). It is recommended due to the limitations of monolingual teaching, such as limiting the perspectives offered by different

languages, hindering linguistic development for those whose medium of education differs from their mother tongue and so forth. Several researchers (Carroll & Mazak, 2017; García & Li, 2014; Canagarajah, 2012; Makalela, 2015) argue that incorporating translanguaging practices into classrooms helps learners better understand the curriculum content than using a single language. That is, using learners' full language repertoire enhances comprehension compared to using an unfamiliar language for teaching and learning.

According to García and Kleyn (2016), translanguaging improves the education of bilingual learners and creates a better and fairer world.

Conversely, local and non-standard varieties in many education systems are still stigmatized and banned in classrooms without worthy justifications (Tollefson, 2007; Siegel, 1999; Salminen et al., 2013). African countries, including Tanzania, have been reluctant to embrace translanguaging, believing that learners' first languages could foster tribalism and hinder the learning of the target official language (Brock-Utne et al., 2010). In this light, this study was inspired by negative attitudes towards the use of local and non-standard varieties in education, despite their potential to improve teaching and learning.

In Tanzania, the Education and Training Policy (URT, 2014) only recognize Swahili as the national language and Language of Instruction (LoI) in primary education and English as the LoI in some pre-primary and primary schools under special arrangements. That is, the policy does not recognize, and actually prohibit the use of any of the about 150 other Ethnic Community Languages (ECLs) as the medium of education in any area in Tanzania. Muzale and Rugemalira (2008) estimated the number of ECLs in Tanzania at 150. This is despite the confirmation by several scholars (Fakeye, 2011; Howe & Lisi, 2014; Krause & Prinsloo, 2016; Wei, 2018; Cook, 2001; Ball, 2010; Madrian, 2014; Kioko, 2015; Trudell, 2016) that mother tongue is the best language for learning.

Despite the ban, Ethnic Community Languages are still used in Tanzania for teaching and learning because they are quite effective in facilitating communication among learners. Scholars (Afzal, 2013; Silvani, 2014; Mtallo, 2015; Nyambura, 2015; Johanes, 2017) report that translanguaging has been indispensable in Tanzania's classrooms, irrespective of the ban on its use in official communication and education. Mlay (2014), who conducted a comparative study of translanguaging use in urban and rural schools in Arusha, Tanzania, found that teachers and learners code-switched and code-mixed languages to facilitate understanding of lessons. Likewise, Rubagumya (2003), who studied language use in English-medium primary schools in Tanzania, found that low English proficiency forced teachers and pupils to engage in translanguaging between English and other Tanzanian languages to facilitate understanding of lessons. Moreover, Roy-

Campbell and Qorro (1997) and Geetha and Kamatchi (2010) found extensive code-switching between English and Swahili and recommended that teachers and learners be allowed to trans language.

Considering that previous studies focused on the problems of English as the language of instruction and the rationale for mother-tongue education, a gap was left in how these banned and stigmatized languages are actually used in primary schools. In this regard, this study chose to study the phenomenon in the Tanzanian context, known for its richness in linguistic resources that could have supported literacy but which are not leveraged. The study focused on the contexts in which languages are used in the teaching and learning processes in the lower classes of the Rungwe District. The ultimate goal is to provide stakeholders with insights on how best to use the available linguistic resources in Tanzania's rural primary school classrooms.

Literature Review

Translanguaging pedagogy is moving away from monolingual teaching strategies towards a more integrated and less restricted use of learners' linguistic repertoires in the teaching and learning process (Henderson & Ingram, 2018). Translanguaging pedagogy is most appropriate in lower classrooms in rural areas, where the language of education differs from the mother tongue, as is the case in many classrooms in Tanzania. Translanguaging mitigates the discrepancy between the learner's LoI and the First Language (L1) in such a context. In the early school years, when teachers and learners use a Second Language (L2)/foreign language other than their mother tongue, they experience difficulty in the LoI because they have not acquired enough proficiency to enable teaching and learning. According to Stanovich et al. (1986), learners in lower grades who use unfamiliar languages perform poorly because they lack proficiency in using such languages as the medium of instruction. In reference to the current study, Awor (2019) established that teachers and learners in rural areas are unfamiliar with the language used for teaching and learning in most primary schools, have limited opportunities to understand lessons and enrollment procedures and are often unable to communicate with school authorities. As a result, such learners receive inferior education due to difficulty in comprehending the taught concepts, leading to inequality in knowledge acquisition.

In this light, such learners need support from their L1. Study findings suggest that teachers using translanguaging in the classroom accommodate students with diverse linguistic backgrounds and ensure learners comprehend the subject matter (Alasmari et al., 2022). Study findings (Greggio & Gil, 2007; McMillan & Rivers, 2011; Tian & Macaro, 2012; Lin, 2013) further show that teachers resort to translanguaging to clarify complex concepts, vocabulary and grammatical features. Teachers also switch to L1 to define concepts for learners. Employing L1 is also essential in instilling grammatical features and structures. Learners must understand the target language's grammar to compose and explain correct grammatical sentences.

Qian et al. (2009) uncovered that praising learner for their good attempts in class during teaching and learning through translanguaging impacts their identities and motivates them to positively embrace the challenges of learning a new language (L2). By switching to L1, learners comprehend the praise directed towards them, which can elevate their classmates' morale. McMillan and Rivers' 2011 study found that using L1 in the classroom helps teachers build connections with learners, creating a positive learning environment that supports learners' language acquisition and understanding of the subject taught.

Translanguaging in lower-level primary schools in rural areas increases learners' participation in class. Translanguaging further cultivates a robust mathematical lexicon in both languages, constituting a key element in promoting multilingualism (Kenyon, 2016). Hence the authors provide lucid and explicit reasons for teachers to use translanguaging in language-learning classrooms, including creating inclusive environment for teaching and learning, facilitating understanding of the subject matter and fostering cooperation among teachers and learners.

A study by Lin (2013) found that the most significant use of translanguaging occurs in grammar instruction. During translanguaging, teachers can utilize children's first-language grammatical knowledge to enhance their second-language grammar knowledge. Furthermore, the author found that translanguaging enhances the cognitive processing of vocabulary. According to Cummins (2005), learners acquire better comprehension and classroom cooperation during the teaching and

learning process in a familiar language than in a foreign language. Kinyaduka and Kiwara (2013), who investigated how the language of instruction affects the educational quality in Morogoro Region, Tanzania, confirmed that most learners (71.4%) preferred Swahili to English. Swahili, the familiar language, enhanced the learners' ability to express their ideas thoroughly by asking and answering questions, summarizing what has been taught and defining vocabulary. The finding lends credence to the argument that learners feel oppressed when taught in a language that is not their native tongue (mother tongue). According to Kinyaduka and Kiwara (2013), such practice tends to sour the relationship between teachers and learners by denying learners the opportunity to use a language they are most familiar with. A study by Shartieli (2016) at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania revealed that translanguaging was perceived as a regular practice among multilingual or bilingual users from all walks of life. The study revealed that the capability to shift between English and Swahili in the language classroom was regularly practiced. The forms of translanguaging applied included intra-sentential (within the sentence) and inter-sentential, mainly to motivate learners to communicate with each other, convey the meaning of subjects, clarify and control learners' behaviour, and encourage learners during study. This practice has been recognized as a helpful tool in multilingual or bilingual societies such as Tanzania.

Moreover, Mwinsheikhe (2002) examined the effects of the language of instruction on science learning by assigning participants to two instructional groups. The experimental group received science instruction, discussions and assessments in Kiswahili to minimize language barriers and promote participation. The control group was taught the same science content in English, reflecting the standard practice in Tanzanian secondary schools. Although both groups studied similar material, the primary distinction was the language used for instruction. The findings indicated that the experimental group exhibited greater classroom participation, enhanced conceptual understanding, and higher science achievement while the control group experienced lower participation and comprehension due to challenges with English. That is, the study found that more students who translanguaged performed better than those who stuck to using unfamiliar language.

However, McMillan and Rivers (2011) provided a comprehensive account of why some teachers chose not to use L1 in English instruction. Most of the reasons center on the notion that the duration spent speaking L1 should instead be spent speaking and practicing the target language. While the use of the official languages of instruction, specifically English and Kiswahili, remains important in the classroom. This approach is especially critical in lower primary classrooms in rural areas, where many learners receive instruction in a language of instruction (LoI) that differs from their first language (L1). Despite this fear, integrating learners' home languages alongside official languages largely improve comprehension, participation and the overall quality of learning.

Methodology

The study adopted a case study design, which involves a detailed and intensive analysis of a particular event, situation, organization or social unit. Case study design enabled an in-depth examination of the status of language use for teaching and learning.

The study was conducted in Rungwe District, a prototypical rural multilingual speaker setting in which Nyakyusa is a mother tongue and Kiswahili is both a second language and the language of instruction. The study area has little exposure to Swahili, making the first language in the area (Nyakyusa) the key language of communication among lower primary school pupils. The study purposively selected four schools based on their location (rural) and the existence of multilingual learners. These included Njugilo (NJ), Kipande (KP), Masukulu (MS) and Goye (GY). A total of forty (40) standard one pupils and eight (8) teachers were selected for the study, consistent with the requirements of a case study design.

The study collected primary data through observation of the teaching of the 8 selected teachers in 24 events. The researchers conducted 24 observations of the facilitation of the teaching and learning process by the eight standard one teachers selected for study, guided by a list of items to be observed related to translanguaging. Moreover, the study conducted interviews with the eight selected teachers and 40 learners. The interviews consisted of open-ended questions.

Data was analyzed thematically, involving steps such as familiarization with the collected data, brainstorming, defining codes and checking the frequency of occurrence of the codes in the collected data (tallying). The codes were then re-examined and grouped into themes presented in the findings section of the paper.

To ensure credibility, the study used multiple sources of evidence and piloted the interview questions and observation guides to ensure their relevance. The study piloted instruments to ensure their relevance and effectiveness in collecting the targeted data. Moreover, the study adhered to all ethical guidelines, including obtaining permits to collect data in the selected schools from the Regional Administrative Secretary of Mbeya Region and the District Administrative Secretary of Rungwe District. In addition, respondents' consent was sought before data collection and they were assured of the confidentiality of their identity, anonymity and free participation.

Findings and Discussion

The study observed 24 teaching and learning facilitations by 8 teachers and conducted interviews with 40 students and 8 teachers on their translanguaging practices during the teaching and learning process. The compounded data from these two research tools is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Contexts of Translanguaging among Teachers and Pupils

| | 24 Observations | | Interview with Teachers | | | | Interview with Students | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|------|-------------------------|------|----|------|-------------------------|------|----|------|----|------|-------|------|
| | TRANS | | KI (L2) | | L1 | | TRANS | | KI | | L1 | | TRANS | |
| | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Greetings | 3 | 12.5 | 5 | 62.5 | 1 | 12.5 | 2 | 25 | 25 | 62 | 5 | 12.5 | 10 | 25 |
| Explaining concepts | 3 | 12.5 | 3 | 37.5 | 1 | 12.5 | 4 | 50 | 21 | 52.5 | 7 | 17.5 | 12 | 30 |
| Drawing attention | 9 | 37.5 | 4 | 50 | 2 | 25 | 2 | 25 | 19 | 47.5 | 8 | 21 | 13 | 32.5 |
| Defining vocabularies | 12 | 50 | 2 | 25 | 4 | 50 | 2 | 25 | 20 | 50 | 7 | 17.5 | 13 | 32.5 |
| Asking questions | 9 | 37.5 | 4 | 50 | 1 | 12.5 | 3 | 37.5 | 17 | 42.5 | 8 | 20 | 15 | 37.5 |
| Summarizing lessons | 12 | 50 | 4 | 50 | 2 | 25 | 2 | 25 | 22 | 55 | 4 | 10 | 14 | 35 |
| Dismissing the class | 6 | 25 | 4 | 50 | 2 | 25 | 2 | 25 | 25 | 62.5 | 5 | 12.5 | 10 | 25 |

Key: KI Swahili, L1= First Language, TRANS= Translanguaging

As shown in Table 1, seven functions of translanguaging were identified: greetings, explaining lessons, drawing attention, explaining difficult terms, asking questions, summarizing lessons and dismissing the class. The detailed findings in each of these aspects are given in the following subsections.

Greetings

Interviews with learners revealed that 62% used Swahili in greetings, 12.5% used their first language (L1) and 25% used both Nyakyusa (L1) and Swahili (L2) in greetings, demonstrating translanguaging. Similarly, interviews with teachers revealed that 62.5% used Swahili (L2), while 25% engaged in translanguaging in greetings. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that 12.5% of the teachers used L1 in greetings. This implies that Swahili still dominates among both teachers and students, yet the presence of other unauthorized languages is prominently featured in the introduction to the teaching and learning process. In one interview schedule, one of the teachers reported, "I sometimes use translanguaging when I enter the classroom to make learners feel like they are part of conversations, which improves their confidence during the teaching and learning process." Another respondent reported the following, "Our teacher sometimes uses both Nyakyusa and Swahili at the beginning of the lesson. He greets us in our tongues to tell us not to fear participating in the learning process."

In three (12.5%) observations, teachers and learners were translanguaging in greetings to build a friendly atmosphere and to encourage learners' involvement in the learning process. In one scenario, a teacher from school MS was seen and heard stating the following: "Hamjambo wanafunzi! Mlembwike!" (How are you, pupils? How have you woken up?

Therefore, translanguaging was used in greetings to a lesser extent than in Swahili. The reasons might be that Swahili is the legal medium of instruction, and therefore, teachers try to be moderate in the use of Nyakyusa. Nyakyusa use appears to only occur by necessity, such as encouraging learners to participate in the learning process. Some authors (Omidire & Ayob, 2022; Sari & Syafryadin, 2024; Paudel, 2024) support the idea of translanguaging in the L1 as it could enable pupils to voice their opinions on the best position and to improve and arrange forthcoming training, which could lead to equal teaching and learning.

Explaining Concepts

Three of the eight teachers interviewed across the four schools (37.5%) reported using only Swahili to explain concepts. One teacher (12.5%) reported using Nyakyusa while four teachers (50%) used a mix of Nyakyusa and Swahili (translanguaging) to explain concepts. A standard one teacher at KP School reported,

We sometimes do translanguaging between Nyakyusa and Swahili to explain concepts when learners fail to grasp the content through the language of instruction. Translanguaging becomes vital because learners have not yet acquired enough vocabulary in Swahili. It helps learners to advance their Swahili.

Additionally, 21 (52.5%) of 40 standard-one pupils interviewed reported using Swahili to contribute ideas during the teaching and learning process. Seven pupils (17.5%) reported using Nyakyusa to explain concepts to colleagues during the teaching and learning process. Further, twelve pupils (30%) reported using both Nyakyusa (L1) and Swahili (L2) to explain concepts to colleagues in the classroom. At NJ School, one student stated, "When a teacher is not in the classroom, I usually ask my fellow learners to explain the lesson in Nyakyusa to me. Teachers also allow us to ask questions in our mother tongue if we do not understand Swahili."

In 24 classroom observations, three (12.5%) found teachers translanguaging when introducing a new lesson. For example, the following conversation occurred when a standard one teacher at NJ School was teaching Arithmetic:

Teacher: Leo tutajifunza hesabu za kujumlisha. Je, mnaelewa maana ya kujumlisha? (Today, we will learn about Arithmetic, the topic of addition. Do you understand the meaning of addition?)

Pupils: Kimyaa! (Silence!)

Teacher: Hamuelewi maana ya kujumlisha? (Don't you understand what "addition" is?)

Pupils: Ndiyo! (Yes!)

Teacher: Ninaposema kujumlisha ni sawa mnaposema ukongelapo kamo kwa Nyakyusa (When I say addition, it is like ukongelapo kamo in Nyakyusa language).

Pupils: Aaah! Mwalimu ngimba lahisi itolo! Tunaelewa. (Aaah! teacher, it is very simple! We have understood).

Further, at MS School, the researchers recorded the following conversation during a lesson:

Teacher: Good morning, learners! Are you all fine? Today, we are going to study living things, which in our Nyakyusa language are called *Utundu utuumi*.

In light of these analyses, teachers and learners utilized translanguaging to explain difficult concepts for effective teaching and learning. This is supported by previous studies, such as those by Mlelwa (2016) and Wei and Ho (2018), which view translanguaging as a strategy to facilitate teaching and learning in multilingual communities. Walter and Trammell (2010), who conducted a longitudinal investigation involving a bilingual education program in Cameroon, showed that Grade 1 Kom learners taught in L1 had higher scores than their peers taught in English. Likewise, Prax-Dubois and Helot (2020) found that translanguaging fills gaps where teachers and learners lack appropriate terminology or want to clarify certain concepts. Therefore, translanguaging is a crucial tool in overcoming language barriers and in enabling effective learning in rural areas. Thus, this study establishes that both teachers and learners highly valued translanguaging for its effectiveness in enhancing the learning and teaching process.

Drawing Attention

Attentiveness has always been part and parcel of the effective learning process. Learners need a conducive environment to pay attention to what is being taught. This study observed the use of translanguaging to draw learners' attention. For instance, a standard one teacher at MS School teaching reading syllables said, "*Ugwee! Ndimbwelu acha kelele*" which means, You! *Ndimbwelu*, stop making noise. The researchers observed that this codemixing of Nyakyusa (L1) and Swahili (L2) words effectively prompted learners to remain quiet and pay attention to the teacher's instruction. In an interview with eight standard one teachers, four (50%) reported using Swahili to draw learners' attention, two (25%) reported using L1, and two (25%) reported translanguaging between Nyakyusa and Swahili to draw learners' attention. A teacher from KP school reported,

There is no problem with translanguaging if it is necessary. As you can see, these learners

are still young and unfamiliar with Swahili, the language of teaching and learning. However, the education policy is clear about using Swahili and English during teaching and learning; it is not allowed. However, translanguaging is still important.

Similarly, nineteen (47.5%) of forty learners interviewed reported using Swahili to get their fellow learners to pay attention to the teachers. Moreover, eight pupils (21%) used Nyakyusa to make fellow learners pay attention to teachers or classmates. The analysis also shows that thirteen pupils (32.5%) used both Swahili (L2) and Nyakyusa (L1) to draw attention. A standard one class leader at NJ School reported the following:

I do not know Swahili better. Therefore, I use Nyakyusa and Swahili to tell my fellow learners what a teacher sends me to tell them. I also use Nyakyusa and Swahili to stop them from making noise during the learning process in the classroom.

In this regard, it was ascertained that pupils paid more attention when their first language was used than when their second language was used. Semantically, translanguaging has more perlocution in drawing attention than a second language. In our view, the results emanate from the relationship between language and society. It appears that learners respond to attention drawn in their mother tongue by associating it with earlier experiences with such expressions in their society. The positive affective response to an individual's mother tongue rather than a foreign language is explained by Skinner's Operant Conditioning (1985) and Pavlov's Classical Conditioning Theory (Akpan, 2020), which argue that repeated exposure enhances both liking and comfort. From a behaviorist perspective, Pavlov's classical conditioning suggests that the native language becomes closely linked to positive early-life experiences such as care, safety and affection, thereby automatically eliciting pleasant emotions, whereas Skinner's operant conditioning further reinforces this through lifelong rewards for using it (social approval, successful communication). Together, these processes create stronger, automatic positive affect toward the highly familiar mother tongue.

Defining Vocabularies

Findings show that translanguaging was used to define difficult L2 terms that learners do not understand. Twelve observations (50%) out of

twenty-four showed the application of translanguaging in defining vocabularies. Interview findings corroborated the observation. Of the eight interviewed teachers, 2 (25%) used Swahili (L2) to define L2 vocabulary, 4 (50%) used Nyakyusa and 2 (25%) used translanguaging to explain difficult terms. Likewise, seven learners (17.5%) used Nyakyusa (L1) to explain difficult terms to their colleagues. In contrast, thirteen (32.5%) learners used Nyakyusa and Swahili (translanguaging) to explain difficult terms. The majority (50%) used Swahili to explain difficult terms. Thus, translanguaging was an essential strategy for teachers and learners to explain difficult terms. A learner from NJ School, for instance, reported: "Although we are not allowed to speak our first language, we sometimes use it when explaining the concepts we cannot manage to explain to the teacher or classmates in Swahili." A teacher at MS School stated, "Most learners are not native speakers of Swahili, the language of teaching and learning. This creates a gap in the learning process. Therefore, teachers must incorporate learners' first language into the learning process, especially in explaining difficult terms."

Likewise, a standard one teacher at KP primary school declared that he used translanguaging whenever learners failed to comprehend terms in L2. The teacher narrated his experience with the Swahili noun *kaa* (crab) when teaching about aquatic life. He said that the class failed to understand the vocabulary despite his lengthy explanation in Swahili. He then told his learners that "kaa" is called *ngwehe* in Nyakyusa and everyone understood. This implies that translanguaging is an effective aid in vocabulary development. Khojan and Ambele (2022) conducted a pilot study in Malaysia and found that trainers did translanguaging in their classrooms to explain unfamiliar terms or concepts and to test learners' comprehension. Slightly fewer than 70% of participants used translanguaging to engage learners and clarify the target language's grammatical rules. Similarly, Tubayqi et al. (2021) observed that the novice cohort employed translanguaging in four distinct scenarios: elucidating grammar, issuing directives, overseeing or aiding learners and rectifying errors during the learning process. In addition, Brabec and Chilton (2015) stated that a strong literacy foundation in one's first language or mother tongue promotes better learning in other subjects and the learning of subsequent languages by enabling learners to ask

questions they never understood. In addition, teachers are free to ask learners questions in their first languages as they seek the correct answers, since learners understand their native languages better. Snell (2017) echoed that translanguaging plays a great role in constructing and nourishing knowledge in educating pupils. Literacy abilities develop more quickly and more deeply when pupils practice their first languages and traditional collections without restrictions. It is further argued that translanguaging facilitates home-school links and cooperation.

Asking questions

Regarding asking questions, 9 (37.5%) classroom observations demonstrated the use of translanguage in asking and answering questions. In interviews, 17 pupils (42.5%) stated that they used Swahili to ask or answer questions. Eight (20%) used Nyakyusa while fifteen (37.5%) used both Nyakyusa (L1) and Swahili (L2) (translanguaging). Teachers agreed with the pupils in the interview: 4 (50%) said they used Swahili in asking and answering questions, 1 (12.5%) used Nyakyusa and 3 (37.5%) used both Nyakyusa (L1) and Swahili (L2) in asking questions in the classroom. One teacher at MS School reported, "Effective learning requires mastering many Swahili vocabulary words, which is still a great challenge for pupils. Hence, we continue using their first language, for example, to ask or answer questions."

Therefore, asking questions was identified as one of the motivations for learners and teachers to do translanguaging. The finding concurs with Wei and Ho (2018), who pointed out that translanguaging is used to elucidate information and co-construct meanings to ensure that distinct voices are more efficiently received. Blackledge and Creese (2010) stated that translanguaging helps maintain identity, access the intended content and provide self-confidence among learners. Thus, it creates a friendly atmosphere where learners are free to express themselves because of the comfort and effectiveness in their communication. García and Li (2014) agree that translanguaging enables pupils to understand and comprehend the target language. Carroll and Mazak (2017) corroborate that translanguaging enhances teaching and understanding by accepting speakers' multilingual and multicultural identities. Furthermore, Nyika (2015) asserts that pupils whose mother tongue is used as Lol have an advantage over those whose L1s are not used as Lol.

Summarizing the Lesson

Classroom observations revealed the usefulness of translanguaging in summarizing the lesson. A standard one learner in the NJ School did translanguaging when summarizing a topic of “Environment” to standard one fellow pupils. In interviews, 22 pupils (55%) reported using Swahili to report their understanding of the lesson, 4 pupils (10%) reported using their first language and 14 pupils (35%) reported using both Swahili and their first language. At KP School, a learner said, “We sometimes use our mother tongue when the teacher asks us to say what we have understood after teaching.” On the other hand, four teachers (50%) reported using Swahili to conclude the lesson. Two teachers (25%) reported using the learners’ first language while two (25%) used both the learners’ first language and second language to conclude the lesson. In one of the rural schools studied, teachers and learners practiced the lesson as follows:

Teacher: Nosyagha ebu tuambie umeelewa nini kuhusu 'mazingira,' hata kwa kilugha cha nyumbani elezea tu ('Nosyagha, please tell us what you have understood about the 'environment', even in your mother tongue).

Nosyagha: Masingila ni maeneo yanayotuzunguka; yaani nyumbani tunaita 'lubhingilo' ('Environment is an area that surrounds us; at home, we refer to it as 'lubhingilo').

At KP School, the following was stated: I use both L1 and L2 to summarize the lesson. I also encourage my pupils to summarize what they have understood during the teaching and learning process. This is very important during the teaching and learning process. The findings align with those of Tabaro (2013) and Delpont (2016), who found that translanguaging creates a conducive environment for learners to participate effectively in the learning process. They observed that translanguaging enabled learners to move between languages, thereby enhancing conceptual understanding rather than relying on a single language. This finding matches Hurst and Mona (2017), who argued that learners felt bad when their L1s were considered inferior. Therefore, to create a conducive learning environment, learners need to feel a sense of ownership of the language of teaching and learning.

Dismissing the class/Saying goodbye

Using learners' first language to end or dismiss the lesson is important for motivating them to return to school the next day. It is a strategy for retaining learners. We thus focused on the teachers' repertoire for dismissing the class, using both observation and interviews. In six observations, out of twenty-four, translanguaging in L1 and L2 was used to dismiss the class by 25%. Moreover, twenty-five learners (62.5%) interviewed confirmed that Swahili was used to bid farewell. Five learners (12.5%) said that they used Nyakyusa to say goodbye to teachers while ten learners (25%) said they used both Nyakyusa and Swahili (translanguaging) to say goodbye to teachers. In an interview, a learner at MS School stated: “We sometimes use our mother tongue when saying goodbye to each other.” In addition, four teachers (50%) said they dismissed the class in Swahili, two (25%) in Nyakyusa, and two (25%) in both Nyakyusa and Swahili (translanguaging).

Using L1 in the classroom fosters a stronger connection with learners, facilitates vocabulary acquisition, enables translation and comparison exercises and promotes multilingualism or bilingualism. Rivera and Mazak (2017) and Lwanga-Lumu (2020) perceived that incorporating the pupils' L1s could lead to a better sense of possession within the education procedure and nurture a more solid sense of identity. Likewise, Hurst and Mona (2017) and Horne and Ferreira-Meyers (2017) rightly observed that pupils feel less confident as they struggle to speak the language of teaching and learning, as stated in the education and training policy.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This analysis has demonstrated that translanguaging is a reflexive practice in teaching and learning in lower classrooms due to the necessity in the environments where learners are doing both learning the L1 and learning in it. Its permission would rather benefit teaching and learning as both teachers and pupils would use it without feeling that they are betraying educational policies and guidelines, enhancing creativity and additive bilingualism. The prohibition of such practical languages denies the realities on the ground, a common practice in multilingual communities, where the discrepancies between language-related policies and the realities of language use and sociolinguistics is common. The continued prohibition of local resources, such as local

languages, perpetuates an education system that does not resonate with the needs of the local population and the learners' context. Linguistically and pedagogically, the use of multiple languages in the classroom encourages learners' identity, greatly enhances the teaching and learning process, and improves learners' concentration; hence it needs to be encouraged and guided.

These findings, therefore necessitate to develop inclusive policies recognizing both standard and non-standard languages. It also implies writing curricula and syllabuses that align with translanguaging practice, giving it impetus as an asset rather than a liability. It also implies investing in these local linguistic resources to maximize their documented benefits in enhancing critical thinking, academic performance, self-esteem and community engagement. Myths associated with translanguaging, such as the idea that it lowers competency in the standard language and creates disunity, can be accommodated by developing comprehensive guidelines and procedures for safely using these readily available and critical linguistic resources in the teaching and learning process.

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