

Translanguaging Pedagogy in Cameroon EFL/ESL Secondary Classrooms

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ABSTRACT: *First language rights in Cameroon EFL/ESL classrooms are marginally protected as they hardly meddle with teacher-student interactions. This study conducted in secondary grammar education in the Adamawa region seeks out English foreign language teachers' attitudes towards translanguaging in the teaching of English. Teachers had to pronounce themselves on the importance of shuttling between English and French/Fulfulde during English lessons and state the conditions under which the use of students' first language in second language teaching was suitable or detrimental to students' growth in English. A population of 40 teachers was elicited through questionnaires and data analysis procedures adopted Ehrman, Leaver & Oxford (2003)'s theoretical framework. Findings revealed that a great deal of teachers reluctantly translanguaged when they taught English to French-speaking secondary students. They were more tolerant when students used French in class to meet their needs more than when they expressed themselves in Fulfulde. The challenge encountered by many teachers in the implementation of translanguaging pedagogy in classroom settings was mainly linguistic competence. Acknowledging EFL teachers' shyness towards the use of learners' L1 in the learning of second language, the researcher recommends a shift of paradigm in EFL teaching in Cameroon classrooms where the use of native languages by students should not be seen by their teachers as dramatic, odd, unproductive and shameful.*

KEYWORDS: Cameroon EFL/ESL classrooms, Fulfulde, French, secondary grammar education, translanguaging pedagogy

INTRODUCTION

The current study investigates teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of translanguaging pedagogy in Cameroon EFL classrooms. It finds out whether English language teachers use French language (the first official language of Cameroon French-speaking students and their lingua franca as well) and/or Fulfulde (the native language of many French-speaking students in the Adamawa and their language of wider communication) during interactions in classrooms; whether they encourage their students to use their first language (s) to negotiate meaning and understanding and whether the approach was beneficial or detrimental to students in their construction of knowledge in English. Finally, the work explores the challenges encountered by teachers.

The teaching of English as a second or foreign language has raised controversial debates for a long time (Brown, 2000) as far as students' L1 use is concerned to shape their knowledge and experiences in the target language. A group of radical scholars on the issue enhances the monolingual approach, that is, the use of English only in classroom environments, for students'

cognition and development in English (Ellis, 1984; Krashen, 1982; Yaphantides, 2009) while another flexible group (Auerbach, 1993; Deller & Rinvoluceri, 2002; Phillipson, 1992; Prodromou, 2002; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Vanderheijden, 2010; Weschler, 1997) goes for dual literacy, the bilingual approach, which to them is instrumental in the acquisition of second language. Cameroon English foreign language teachers' attitude towards translanguaging pedagogy is mitigated due to the fact that they are divided on the issue.

The problem above-mentioned leads to the following research questions:

1. What are EFL teachers' attitudes towards students using French language and/or Fulfulde in classroom settings during instructions?
2. To what extent do they encourage their students to use French and/or Fulfulde during English lessons?
3. What are EFL teachers' perceived benefits and drawbacks of using the student's L1 during interactions in English?
4. What are teachers' challenges while applying the translanguaging pedagogy?

This study is relevant as it brings to light Cameroonian teachers' stance on the use of first language (s) in the teaching of English as a second or foreign language. Professionally, it helps teachers revisit the teaching strategies used in classrooms for a successful teaching of English language and it enlightens them on the assets of using EFL students' L1 for second language development and emancipation. Administratively, it helps decision-makers, the Inspectorate in Charge of Bilingualism and teachers' trainers to reinforce the teaching capacity of EFL teachers on inclusive bilingualism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Translanguaging in bilingual education

This section reviews the origin of translanguaging, its relevance in bilingual education and previous studies on translanguaging pedagogy in the Cameroon EFL/ESL context.

Origin and definitions

The Welsh origin of translanguaging traces back from the 1980's to the contemporary use. Cen Williams first coined the term *trawsieithu* in 1994, translated by Baker (2011) as 'translanguaging', introduced in Wales's education as a reaction against language compartmentalization in the teaching of subjects, topics, or knowledge in bilingual education. Welsh scholars through translanguaging questioned the long-held belief in language separation for language development in bilingual education. The concept was brought up to develop balanced and confident pupils and above all to protect Welsh minority language, which was endangered by English, a colonial language dominantly used in schools.

The assumption is that there is no exact definition of translanguaging as the meaning will become more refined and clarified conceptually through further research (Lewis et al., 2012, p. 2). There is a consensus among the authors who dealt with translanguaging that it is a shift of language systems or varieties in classroom pedagogical discourses during instructions. Baker (2011, p. 288), for instance, points out that "translanguaging" is "the process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages". In the same light, García (2009:44) posits that it is "an approach to bilingualism

that is centered not on languages as has been often the case, but on the practices of bilinguals that are readily observable”. She complemented that these practices, in which bilinguals “intermingle linguistic features that have hereto been administratively or linguistically assigned to a particular language or language variety” (p. 51), are “the normal mode of communication that, with some exceptions in some monolingual enclaves, characterizes communities throughout the world” (p. 44). García (ibid, p.45) further indicates that translanguaging refers to “multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds”. In education, García says, translanguaging goes beyond code-switching and translation because it refers to the process by which bilingual students perform bilingually in the myriad multimodal ways of classrooms.

Williams (2002) emphasised that: “translanguaging entails using one language to reinforce the other in order to increase understanding and to augment the pupil’s ability in both languages” (p. 40). He goes on to describe the process from the child’s perspective: pupils internalise new ideas they hear, assign their own understanding to the message/concept, and simultaneously and immediately utilise the message/concept in their other language(s).

Lewis et al. (2012b) clarify that translanguaging refers to using one language to reinforce the other so as to increase understanding and augment the pupil’s activity in both languages. Canagarajah (2011, p.401) takes up the term as “the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system”.

The term “translanguaging” grew in literature in the first decade of the twenty-first century through Ofelia García (2009), Canagarajah (2011a, b), Wei (2011), Hornberger and Link (2012) and Lewis et al. (2012a, b), who beyond the Welsh context, shaped, extended, transformed and updated the concept originated from Williams (1994). From the beginning there have been differences in the way in which scholars have conceived translanguaging, and as the debate carries on, the concept itself has substantially drifted in meaning. The term is likened to ‘code-switching’ (García, 2009, p.117) though they are epistemologically different, ‘translingual practice’ (Canagarajah, 2013, p.8), an umbrella term that he prefers to ‘polylingualism’, ‘metrolingualism’, ‘codemeshing’, and ‘translanguaging’ used today to refer to mixing modes in bilingual education because unlike translanguaging, translingual practices focus on the social practices of mixing modes and symbol systems as a creative improvisation to adapt to the needs of the context and the local situations (Canagarajah, 2011b).

Cummins (2019) uses a variety of competitive terms to denote the same practice: ‘crosslinguistic pedagogy’, ‘multilingual teaching strategies’, ‘bilingual teaching strategies’, ‘teaching through a multilingual lens’, ‘translanguaging instructional practices’, ‘crosslingual instructional practice’, ‘crosslingual practice’ and ‘heteroglossic instructional practice’. Other scholars used different terms which include ‘the pedagogy of translanguaging’ and ‘translanguaging pedagogical strategies’ (García & Kleyn, 2016), ‘dynamic plurilingual pedagogies’ (García & Flores, 2012), ‘translanguaging as a pedagogy’, ‘translanguaging for the classroom’ and ‘translanguaging as pedagogy’ (Paulsrud *et al.*, 2017), ‘bilingual instructional strategies’ and ‘bilingual pedagogy’ (Creese & Blackledge, 2010), ‘translanguaging practice’ (Lin, 2020), ‘translanguaging practices’ (Cenoz & Santos, 2020), ‘translanguaging pedagogy’ (Seltzer & García, 2020; Tian *et al.*, 2020), ‘translanguaging-oriented pedagogy’ (Leung & Valdés, 2019), ‘concurrent approaches’ (López, 2008), ‘heteroglossic pedagogies’ and ‘translanguaging approaches’ (Probyn, 2019).

To sum up, definitions attempted on translanguageing converge on the assumption that it is a pedagogic approach involving the simultaneous use of dual languages for literacy, to strengthen learners' abilities in the teaching/learning of second language. Also, it is a cognitive strategy employed by students to construct their knowledge in the second language with the help of their first language.

Benefits of translanguageing

Translanguageing pedagogy evolving in the global world has been experimented in bilingual and mainstream schools where results proved relevant.

Epistemologically, Colin Baker opines that translanguageing helped students make meaning and gain understanding and knowledge. He explained: "To read and discuss a topic in one language, and then to write about it in another language, means that the subject matter has to be processed and "digested" (2011,p.289). Baker (2001) came out with four potential educational advantages to translanguageing:

1. It may promote a deeper and fuller understanding of the subject matter.
2. It may help the development of the weaker language.
3. It may facilitate home-school links and cooperation.
4. It may help the integration of fluent speakers with early learners.

Similarly, translanguageing allows students to use their native language as an instrumental linguistic resource which helps them develop ways to negotiate meaning and communicate in English. Translanguageing allows students to use their native language as a tool to help them excel in their target language (Cummins, 2008, p.65). Cummings states that to develop child's second language, the native language must also be well developed. Developing native's languages not only strengthens the base for English or another target language but also develops learners' literacy skills in their native languages.

Additionally, allowing students to use the language of their choice during interactions in language classrooms, teachers assist students to be autonomous as a result helping them to integrate their knowledge in their native language with their growing knowledge in the target language (White, Hailemariam, & Ogbay, 2013).

Ultimately, through translanguageing, a student may create an identity as a language learner who incorporates his or her native language and home culture, as well as the target language and culture to navigate social situations and opportunities for communication.

All in all, translanguageing technique not only functions as a catalyst to language learning or language integration but also as an identical trait.

Translanguageing in Cameroon ELT classrooms

There is a paucity of research works on translanguageing in the Cameroon context. Nevertheless, Belibi (2015) carried out an empirical study on the impact of English-only and bilingual approaches to EFL instruction on low-achieving Bilinguals in Cameroon. The aim of his research paper was to investigate whether low-achieving bilingual EFL learners performed better in grammar and speaking when French, their first language of literacy, was used in the EFL classroom. A two- phase experiment involving teaching two grammar lessons and two speaking lessons to a control group in English only and to an experimental group with the use

of French. Each group's mean percentage improvement after each phase of the experiment was compared to their respective scores in the baseline. The results of this study showed that low-achieving bilingual EFL learners in Cameroon performed better in grammar and speaking when French was allowed in the classroom. Code-switching allowed learners who lagged behind to close the gap with their more advanced classmates. Also, students taught with the bilingual approach made much more noticeable progress in speaking despite fears that using L1 in the EFL classroom would reduce their exposure to English and subsequently inhibited oral language development. The current , at the difference with the preceding one, showcases teachers' affect towards the use of students' L1 in bilingual education and extensively reveals the status of native languages in the teaching of English as second or foreign language in Cameroon classrooms.

Research design

Theoretical framework

In the context of second language learning, Ehrman, Leaver & Oxford (2003: p.315) are of the opinion that a learning strategy is productive or unproductive depending on its outcome. As a matter of fact, when the use of a particular strategy produces successful learning then the strategy is said to be effective. On the other hand if the outcome is the reverse, the strategy will be dropped. They complement that learning strategy is beneficial within three contexts: (a) the strategy relates well to the L2 task at hand, (b) the strategy fits the particular student's learning style preferences to one degree or another, and (c) the student employs the strategy effectively and links it with other relevant strategies (ibid, 2003, p.315). Teachers' attitudes towards translanguaging in Cameroon EFL teaching context will depend on the outcome of the approach in their classroom.

Informants

The informants qualified for this study were teachers of English as a foreign or second language from secondary grammar schools in the Adamawa region, who taught the classes of *Sixième* (Form I) through *Terminale* (Upper Sixth) in mainstream or bilingual high schools. A total of forty teachers was surveyed distributed as 12 males (30%) and 28 females (70%). Their age range showed that twelve (30%) were between twenty and twenty nine years old; sixteen (40%) of them ranged between thirty years old and forty nine while twelve (30%) others oscillated between forty years and above. The teaching experience moved between two years and thirty one years. Twenty four informants (60%) were trained teachers, holders of the Higher Teacher's Training College Certificate whereas sixteen (40%) of them were holders of the Bachelor's Degree or Masters' Degree.

Instruments of data collection

The quantitative technique was used as main tool of survey. A questionnaire of eleven items was administered to 40 EFL teachers. Section A dealt with teacher's profile or identification. Section B sought teachers' attitudes towards translanguaging, rating their proficiency in French and Fulfulde; seeking their beliefs on the benefits of using French and/or Fulfulde in the classroom; enquiring how often they used their students' L1 during classroom activities for some specific purposes, how often they encouraged their students, how important it was for teachers to use students' first language. Further, they were appealed to describe situations in which using students' first language was beneficial and detrimental and ultimately they were asked to speak out the challenges encountered while implementing the translanguaging teaching

mode in the EFL classroom. Noteworthy, some teachers were used as research assistants to give out questionnaires.

Validation of instruments

Initially, the questionnaire was piloted to five teachers of English as second or foreign languages to validate the questions. After collecting the informants' responses, the questionnaire was reworded and some questions dropped based on respondents' answers and judgments. Later, the questionnaire was administered to a bigger pool of teachers for final analysis.

Method of data collection and analysis

The data collected are presented and analysed in tables using statistical modes. Afterwards, the findings are discussed and summarized alternately.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Four research questions were devised at the beginning of the study. The results are discussed and summarized in turn.

EFL teachers' attitudes towards students using French language and/or Fulfulde in classroom settings during instructions.

Question 1 assessed teachers' proficiency in French and Fulfulde.

Table 1: Teachers' self-assessment of their proficiency in French and Fulfulde

| N° | Items | Percentage | | | |
|----|--|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | French | | Fulfulde | |
| | | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 1 | I only know a few basic words and phrases | - | 40 (100%) | 12 (30%) | 28 (70%) |
| 2 | I am able to have limited conversation on everyday topics. | 36 (90%) | 4 (10%) | 28 (70%) | 12 (30%) |
| 3 | I am able to discuss a variety of topics without too much trouble. | 36 (90%) | 4 (10%) | 28 (70%) | 12 (30%) |
| 4 | I have no problem communicating on a wide range of topics | 36 (90%) | 4 (10%) | 28 (70%) | 12 (30%) |

As shown by Table 1 above, all the surveyed teachers (100%) denied that their proficiency in French was limited to few words or phrases. The same goes for Fulfulde where the majority of teachers (70%) denied that their fluency in that dialect was limited. A bigger proportion (90%) is able to have limited conversation on everyday topics in French and they can do the same in their great number (70%) in Fulfulde. The overwhelming majority of teachers (90%) stated that they were able to discuss a variety of topics in French without too much difficulty. Likewise, a greater percentage (70%) claimed to be able to do the same in Fulfulde. These same teachers in their majority (90%) have no problem communicating on a wide range of topics in French and most of them (70%) can do the same in Fulfulde. Overall, the greater proportion of teachers

(90%), in their claim, can interact in French when 70% of them can exchange in Fulfulde. These findings are strong indications that these teachers have translanguaging potentials.

Question 2 measured teachers' opinion on the necessity to use the student's L1 in the EFL classroom.

Table 2: Teachers' opinion on the necessity to use L1 in the EFL classroom

| Items | Frequency | | | | Total |
|--|----------------|-------------|------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | Strongly agree | Agree | disagree | Strongly disagree | |
| Students' first language should be used in the EFL classroom | - | 32 (80%) | 8 (20%) | - | 40 (100%) |

Findings on the necessity to use students' first language while teaching English demonstrated that most teachers (80%) agreed on the issue while more than the quarter (20%) disagreed. The conclusion is that many teachers are conscious of the relevance of translanguaging.

Questions 3 and 4 subsumed in Table 4 below enquired about the frequency of Fulfulde and/or French usage while teaching English.

Table 3: Frequency of Fulfulde and/or French usage during classroom interactions

| Items | Frequency | | | | | | | |
|---|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| | Fulfulde | | | | French | | | |
| | Very often | often | rarely | never | Very often | often | rarely | never |
| Frequency of Fulfulde and/or French usage in classrooms | - | 3 (7.5%) | 3 (7.5%) | 34 (85%) | 2 (5%) | 12 (30%) | 22 (55%) | 4 (10%) |
| Total | 100% | | | | 100% | | | |

In compliance with Table 3, the overwhelming majority of teachers (85%) opined that they never used Fulfulde during English classes whereas an insignificant group avowed that they rarely (7.5%) or never (7.5%) employed it. A similar attitude is held towards the use of French. More than the half of teachers (55%) argued that they rarely switched to French while instructing their students in English while a minority group stated that they did it very often (5%), often (3%) or never (10%). Based on the above results, it appears that English foreign language teachers in the Adamawa region show less concern in translanguaging pedagogy. When they have to switch to students' first language, French is the leading choice. The reason is that all their students speak French since it is their main language of instruction and interaction inside and outside the classroom. The choice of Fulfulde by some teachers is also justified as many families in the Adamawa region, though linguistically different, speak Fulfulde as the lingua franca of the region.

Table 4 presents teachers' survey on how often they used French and / or Fulfulde for some peculiar tasks as far as question 5 is concerned.

Table 4: Frequency of using French and/or Fulfulde for the following tasks

| Items | Frequency | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| | Fulfulde | | | | French | | | |
| | Very often | often | rarely | never | Very often | often | rarely | never |
| Explaining concepts | - | 2 (5%) | 2 (5%) | 36 (90%) | - | 6 (15%) | 28 (70%) | 6 (15%) |
| Describing vocabulary terms | 1 (2.5%) | 1 (2.5%) | 3 (7.5%) | 35 (87.5%) | 2 (5%) | 14 (35%) | 20 (50%) | 4 (10%) |
| Give directions | | 1 (2.5%) | - | 39 (97.5%) | 1 (2.5%) | 2 (5%) | 27 (67.5%) | 10 (25%) |
| Classroom management | - | 2 (5%) | 1 (2.5%) | 37 (92.5%) | 1 (2.5%) | 3 (7.5%) | 19 (47.5%) | 17 (42.5%) |
| Asking questions | | 1 (2.5%) | 2 (5%) | 37 (92.5%) | - | 3 (7.5%) | 36 (90%) | 1 (2.5%) |
| Giving feedback to students | | 3 (7.5%) | - | 37 (92.5%) | - | 3 (7.5%) | 20 (50%) | 17 (42.5%) |
| Praising students | 1 (2.5%) | | - | 39 (97.5%) | 1 (2.5%) | 3 (7.5%) | 4 (10%) | 32 (80%) |
| Building bonds with students | | 1 (2.5%) | 1 (2.5%) | 38 (95%) | - | 3 (7.5%) | 19 (47.5%) | 18 (45%) |
| Quick clarification during activities | - | - | 2 (5%) | 38 (95%) | - | 3 (7.5%) | 36 (90%) | 1 (2.5%) |
| Helping low proficient students | 1 (2.5%) | 1 (2.5%) | - | 38 (95%) | 4 (10%) | 9 (22.5%) | 27 (67.5%) | - |
| Other | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

In accordance with Table 4, teachers' views on how often they used students' first language (s) for specific tasks provided the following results: The majority of teachers (90%) reported that they never explained concepts in English to students in Fulfulde. Alternatively, these same teachers in big numbers (70%) claimed that they rarely switched to French to explain concepts in English to their learners.

As for the description of vocabulary terms, a high percentage of teachers (87.5%) reported that they never used Fulfulde to fulfil that purpose. Otherwise, half of the teachers (50%) asserted that they used French to describe lexical terms.

Concerning giving directions, virtually all teachers (97.5%) never achieved that function in Fulfulde. On the contrary, many of them (67.5%) said they rarely gave directions in French.

For classroom management, the greater proportion of teachers (92.5%) claimed that they never used Fulfulde while nearly the half (47.5%) rarely used French.

About asking questions, the majority of teachers (92.5%) stated that they never operated in Fulfulde. In the same light, 90% of them argued that they rarely did that in French.

The issue on giving feedback to students in Fulfulde or in French showed that the majority (92.5%) denied that they did it in Fulfulde whereas the half (50%) asserted that they rarely fulfilled that in French.

As regards teachers' opinion on praising students, almost all the teachers (97.5%) posit that they never achieved that in Fulfulde. Similarly, the majority of teachers (80%) claimed that they never praised students in French.

Coming to building bonds, the largest amount of teachers (95%) asserted that they never interacted in Fulfulde while less than the half (47.5%) reported that they rarely spoke in French.

Reports on quick clarifications during classroom activities showed that several teachers (95%) never used Fulfulde for the purpose and nearly the same percentage (90%) claimed they rarely resorted to French to clarify issues quickly.

Regarding the item on helping low proficient students, the highest number of teachers (95%) never addressed learners in Fulfulde. Likewise, 67.5% of them rarely used French to assist low proficient students.

As for other purposes, a teacher claimed he often used Fulfulde or French to crack jokes with his students or to emphasise a point.

All things considered, the greater majority of the surveyed EFL teachers denied using Fulfulde to explain concepts to their students; to describe vocabulary terms; to give directions; to manage classroom; to ask questions; to give feedback to students; to praise students; to build bonds with students; to quickly clarify during activities and to help low proficient students. In the same vein, these teachers stated that they rarely fulfilled these tasks in French. Teachers' behaviour indicates that they usually conduct their courses in English and move to speakers' first language marginally. They shy away from translanguaging which for them delays learners in the acquisition of the second language.

Teachers' encouragement concerning their students' use of French and/ or Fulfulde during English classes

Question 6 sought how often teachers encouraged their students to use their first language during English language activities in the classroom. The results are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5: The extent to which teachers encouraged students to use French and/or Fulfulde

| Items | Frequency | | | | | | | |
|---|------------|----------|----------|------------|------------|------------|----------|----------|
| | Fulfulde | | | | French | | | |
| | Very often | often | rarely | never | Very often | often | rarely | never |
| Asking questions | - | - | 4 (10%) | 36 (90%) | - | 8 (20%) | 20 (50%) | 12 (30%) |
| Asking for permission | - | - | - | 40 (100%) | 4 (10%) | 12 (30%) | 2 (5%) | 22 (55%) |
| Translation | - | 8 (20%) | 2 (5%) | 30 (75%) | - | 4 (10%) | 34 (85%) | 2 (5%) |
| Discussing tasks in small groups | 2 (5%) | 2 (5%) | - | 36 (90%) | - | 20 (50%) | 20 (50%) | - |
| Providing assistance to peers during activities | 11 (27.5%) | 1 (2.5%) | 1 (2.5%) | 27 (67.5%) | 1 (2.5%) | 9 (22.25%) | 16 (40%) | 14 (35%) |
| Explaining problem not related to content | 2 (5%) | - | 4 (10%) | 34 (85%) | - | 4 (10%) | 28 (70%) | 8 (20%) |
| Helping low proficient students | | | 3 (7.5%) | 37 (92.5%) | 1 (2.5%) | 3 (7.5%) | 36 (90%) | |
| Other | | | | | | | | |

Table 5 above showed that the overwhelming majority of teachers (90%) never encouraged their students to ask questions in Fulfulde while half of them (50%) rarely allowed them in French.

All teachers (100%) never accepted students to ask permission in Fulfulde; more than the half (55%) never allowed them to perform the same function in French.

The three quarters of teachers (75%) reported that they never encouraged translation in Fulfulde in their class while another large group (85%) rarely let it go in French.

The greater majority of teachers (90%) stated that they never permitted students to discuss tasks in small groups in Fulfulde but a half (50%) often encouraged it in French.

A good number of respondents (67.5%) reported that they never encouraged their students to provide assistance to peers in Fulfulde but less than the half (40%) claimed to allow their students assist their peers in French.

The overwhelming majority of teachers (85%) said that they never encouraged students to explain problems not related to content in Fulfulde while another important group (70%) rarely encouraged learners to do that in French.

As far as using Fulfulde to help low proficient students is concerned, the majority of teachers (92.5%) argued that they never encouraged it and another great proportion (90%) stated that they rarely encouraged it.

On balance, the surveyed teachers in their majority seem to indicate that they are against their students using Fulfulde in classrooms to learn English. Reversely, they are tolerant when students use French as an alternative to English.

Teachers' perceived benefits and drawbacks of using the student's L1 during interactions in class

Teachers in question 7 measured how important it was to use their students' L1 during English language teaching. The findings are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: The extent to which it is important to use students' L1 during ELT

| Item | Responses | | | | Percentage |
|--|----------------|-------------|------------------------|---------------|------------|
| | Very important | Important | A little bit important | Not important | |
| How important it is using students' L1 during ELT. | | | | | |
| Total | 2 (5%) | 10 (25%) | 28 (70%) | - | 40 (100%) |

In accordance with Table 6 above, the greater number of teachers (70%) claimed that using students' first language in the EFL classroom is a little bit important while another negligent group argues that it is important (25%) or very important (5%). The obtained results demonstrate that EFL teachers in the Adamawa region perceive translanguaging pedagogy not as very instrumental to students' growth in second language learning.

Question 8 requested teachers to describe situations in which using the student's first language to teach English is beneficial. They surmised that switching in students' L1 is useful:

- when the teacher has to clarify exercise instructions and clear student's doubts;
- during the 'bilingual game';
- when students are stuck on some activities therefore the teacher may use the student's first language to ease comprehension;
- when students have a problem they cannot express in the target language;

- when the lesson presented seems difficult; after using gestures or other strategies unsuccessfully to pass across the message;
- to explain difficult concepts;
- to provide assistance to students, by students in group works;
- to give advice.

In question 9, they emphasised that using student's first language in class for the teaching of English was detrimental in:

- situations like translation: Excessive translation pushes students to expect from teachers translating regularly.
- the teaching of literature. It is detrimental while explaining the functionality of language because learners may turn to reflect or think in their first language before translating them into their second language.
- in case of conflict solving as the classroom is made up of many native languages it likely creates a kind of discrimination.

Asked whether they had additional information that they would like to share about their perception (either by the teacher or by the student) of the use of students' first language in the classroom in question 10, teachers put forward these arguments:

- The use of students' first language breeds contempt because of too much familiarity.
- It does not encourage the practice of the target language.
- It makes students lazy.
- It may deviate from objectives.
- It should be avoided; it would not help them be proficient.
- It appears informal.
- It could make students lose interest in the target language; the student will always use his/her first language.

Challenges encountered while implementing translanguaging pedagogy

A few teachers in question 11 confessed that they were not proficient in Fulfulde nor in French. The fact that students come from various linguistic backgrounds is a real problem.

Pedagogical implications

This study will have far-reaching implications for the future of EFL/ESL pedagogy in Cameroon classrooms where translanguaging is seen by many teachers as a hindrance to second language teaching and learning. Teachers through this attempt will have to reconsider their xenophobic views towards the use of students' native language or first language in the classroom while imparting knowledge in English. In addition, teachers who feel ashamed to speak students' first language will overcome their fear and apathy thus understanding that they can draw from students' speech or verbal repertoire to facilitate learning. This research work will push teachers to learn their students' first language especially those who are blank or reluctant, for successful pedagogy. Further, the study may also shift the Inspectorate in Charge of Bilingualism platonic view of using English only to develop students' bilingualism whereby advising teachers during seminars or workshops to be flexible in their methodology by accepting the use of learners' L1 in a myriad of ways.

CONCLUSION

The current study in secondary grammar education investigated EFL/ESL Adamawa teachers' behavioural attitude towards the implementation of translanguaging as a teaching mode in the classrooms. Forty teachers were surveyed using the quantitative method. Ehrman, Leaver & Oxford (2003) theory served as theoretical paradigm. Five research questions were outlined at the outset of the survey which produced significant results. The findings revealed that the greater majority of teachers held a positive view about using students' first language in the EFL classroom though they claimed that it was a little bit important. However, practice has shown that they are apathetic to translanguaging though they acknowledged its relevance. Thus, teachers never used Fulfulde in class but marginally switched to French to build up students' knowledge in English. It appeared that they never encouraged these students to use Fulfulde but occasionally allowed them to use French language in a few tasks. From their own perspective, translanguaging is judicious to clarify points; to ease understanding; to explain difficult concepts; to provide assistance to slow learners; to give advice; when a student cannot express his/her problem in English or in case all strategies used by the teacher in the target language were not successful to pass the message across. They emphasized that it is detrimental in the teaching of literature in English or, when the teacher abusively uses the grammar translation method, which inhibits students' will to think in the second language. Among the challenges met by these teachers, the linguistic factor appeared to be the hurdle since a few teachers were not fluent in Fulfulde and/or French. This study urges Cameroonian EFL teachers to overcome stereotypes around the use of first language in EFL classrooms perceived by many as debilitating and appeals them to move towards pedagogy of respect for native language rights which are equity and tolerance.

Suggestions for further research

This research work was conducted in secondary medium education in the Adamawa Cameroon. Further research on the issue can be extended to elementary education in the same area and above.

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Appendix**Questionnaire**

This anonymous questionnaire is devised to get your perception of the use of translanguaging for the teaching of English as a second or foreign language in the classroom. Please, answer all the questions. Your responses will be used only for research purposes.

SECTION A: Teacher's profile

Name of the school: _____

Type of school: mainstream bilingual

Gender: Female Male

Age range: 20-29 30-39 40 and above

Teaching experience: _____

Class (es) taught: _____

First official language: _____

Highest certificate: _____

SECTION B: Teachers and translanguaging**1. Rate your proficiency**

| N° | Items | Answers | |
|----|---|----------|--------|
| | | Fulfulde | French |
| | | Yes | No |
| 1 | I only know a few basic words and phrases. | | |
| 2 | I am able to have limited conversation on everyday topics. | | |
| 3 | I am able to discuss a variety of topics without too much trouble. | | |
| 4 | I have no problem communicating with native-speakers on a wide range of topics. | | |

2. Do you think that student's first language should be used for the teaching of English?

Strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

If disagree, why?

3. How often do you use Fulfulde during English lessons?

Very often often rarely never

4. How often do you use French during English lessons?

Very often often rarely never

5. How often do you use Fulfulde and French in the following purposes?

| Items | Fulfulde | | | | French | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-------|--------|-------|------------|-------|--------|-------|
| | Very often | often | rarely | never | Very often | often | rarely | never |
| To explain concepts | | | | | | | | |
| To describe vocabulary terms | | | | | | | | |
| To give directions | | | | | | | | |
| For classroom management | | | | | | | | |
| To ask questions | | | | | | | | |
| To give feedback to students | | | | | | | | |
| To praise students | | | | | | | | |
| To build bonds with students | | | | | | | | |
| To quickly clarify during activities | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| To help low proficient students | | | | | | | | |
| Other (please specify) | | | | | | | | |

6. How often do you encourage your students to use their L1 in the following situations?

| Items | Fulfulde | | | | French | | | |
|--|----------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|
| | Always | often | rarely | Never | Always | often | rarely | never |
| Ask questions | | | | | | | | |
| Ask for permission | | | | | | | | |
| Translation | | | | | | | | |
| To discuss tasks in small groups | | | | | | | | |
| To provide assistance to peers during activities | | | | | | | | |
| To explain problem not related to content | | | | | | | | |
| To help low proficient students | | | | | | | | |
| Other (s): please specify | | | | | | | | |

7. How important is it for teachers to use their student's L1 during English language teaching?

Very important Important A little important Not important

8. In your own words, please describe situations in which using the student's first language in EFL classrooms is beneficial?

9. In your own words, please describe situations in which using the student's native language in EFL classrooms is detrimental?

10. Is there any additional information that you would like to share about your perception or use (either by the teacher or by the student) of the use of students' first language in the classroom?

11. What are the challenges of using students' first language during English language lessons?

Author's biography

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