

## Translanguaging Practice in the Teaching and Learning of English and Kiswahili in Kakuma Refugee Camp School

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### Abstract

This study discusses translanguaging practices in the teaching and learning of English and Kiswahili in Kakuma refugee camp school in North Western part of Kenya. The aim of the study was to explore how teachers draw on their students' entire linguistic repertoires in the teaching and learning of English. This study was guided by translanguaging theory. Through a case study approach, semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews and unstructured interviews, data were collected and analysed using thematic analysis. The findings of the study show that although teachers use translanguaging in the teaching and learning of English and Kiswahili in Kakuma refugee camp school, they do not utilise it effectively as a teaching pedagogy. The findings of this study are consistent with other studies carried in refugee camps that have indicated that translanguaging facilitates the teaching and learning of new languages used as language of teaching and learning in the host countries. The findings of this study may inform the need to recognise translanguaging as a legitimate teaching pedagogy in the language-in-education policy in Kenya and in refugee camp schools in Kenya.

**Key Words:** Translanguaging, Translanguaging Theory, Codeswitching, Language of Teaching and Learning, Pedagogy, Refugee Camp, Students L1, Translation

### Introduction

Many refugee students across the world face the challenge of studying a new language that is used as language of teaching and learning (LoTL) in refugee camp schools in the host countries. Language plays a key role in accessing education and facilitating communication. However, language becomes a barrier if students find it hard to infer meaning or concepts disseminated through it. Therefore, it becomes hard for them to be socially integrated in the host country if they are not proficient in the language used for communication (Dixon, 2018). Dryden-Peterson (2015) points out that most young refugee students who seek asylum in United States face the challenge of learning LoTL, thereby hindering their mastery of subject matter and active participation in the teaching and learning activities in the school. Dryden-Peterson goes ahead to give examples of schools in the USA that have used translanguaging to help refugee students learn and have a sense of social belonging.

Recently, several studies have advocated for the use of translanguaging in helping refugee students learn the new language used as LoTL in host countries. In a study investigating translanguaging in the island of Lesvo, Greece in an education setting in the refugee camps, Yilmaz (2019) reported that refugees use translanguaging for communication survival. This case is similar to that of Kakuma refugee camp school where refugee students must learn English which is the LoTL for all subjects except Kiswahili, and learn Kiswahili which is the language of communication (LoC). Similarly, in a study conducted by Dryden-Peterson (2015) in the United States, it was shown that successful schools use translanguaging to enable refugees and immigrants who are newcomers in the United States to develop content mastery and participate actively in the teaching and learning activities in the school. Based on a study on a Canadian school, Viegen (2020) also suggested that it is vital for children and youth from refugee background to use translanguaging in school to support their educational needs in the host countries. However, Viegen's context was different from that of Kakuma refugee camp where refugee students are faced with the problem of learning two languages - English which is

LoTL, and Kiswahili, which is LoC in the local community. In the same vein, in a study carried in six refugee camps in Greece by Translators without Borders (2017), it was found that translanguaging helps the humanitarian aid workers and teachers to overcome communication challenges.

The studies on translanguaging in refugee camps are consistent with studies that have demonstrated the value of the use of translanguaging in language teaching and learning. Krause and Prinsloo (2016) carried an ethnographic case study in Khayelitsha township primary school and found out that teachers use multicentricity of linguistic resources to make students understand the subject matter. In addition, Makoe (2018) argued that translanguaging enhances students' interaction in the teaching and learning activity in South African black working schools as opposed to using English alone as LoTL. Makoe's view is supported by Torpsten (2018), who claims that translanguaging gives opportunity to multilingual students to be at par with monolingual students in learning the target language. Moreover, in a study carried in the UK, Kenner (2004) found out that bilingual students use more than one media from Chinese, Arabic and Spanish when writing hence switching from one language to another. In contrast, in Kakuma refugee camp school, refugee students are not allowed to use more than one language in writing. Although, there is a plethora of studies on translanguaging in education, only a few studies are located in refugee camp schools in Africa, in particular Kenya, where refugee students face the challenge of learning two languages, of which one is the LoTL and the other is the LoC. Furthermore, these two languages are also taught as subjects and examined in the curriculum.

This study explored how teachers draw on full linguistic repertoire of their learners in the teaching and learning of English and Kiswahili in Kakuma refugee camp school through the lens of translanguaging theory. The findings of the study indicate that although translanguaging practice is used in the teaching and learning of English and Kiswahili, its potential as a teaching practice is not fully exploited.

The findings of this study may inform language-in-education policies that are based on the view that translanguaging as a legitimate teaching pedagogy in the refugee camp schools in Kenya and elsewhere. Further, translanguaging practice can be incorporated in pre- and in-service teacher education, particularly targeting teachers in refugee camp schools in Kenya.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Translanguaging theory originated in Wales, where it was coined as *transieithu* by Welsh educator Cen Williams in 1994, later translated into English as *translanguaging* by Collins Baker. Translanguaging was conceived as a classroom pedagogical practice that facilitated teaching and learning of bilinguals, in a context where teachers used two languages one as an input and another as output (Lewi, Jones and Baker, 2012). Later, García (2009) extended the meaning of translanguaging as language practice of bilingual or multilingual use of their full linguistic repertoire to infer meaning and develop deep understanding of academic tasks. Translanguaging as a pedagogical and communicative tool is used to underpin this study.

Translanguaging as a pedagogical practice has proven to be effective in a variety of educational contexts where the LoTL is the second language of students (Li, 2018). It offers several advantages such as empowering both the teacher and learners in the teaching and learning activity through meaning making, experience and identity development (García, 2009; Creese and Blackledge, 2015), encourages school-community interaction, facilitates deep understanding of the subject matter, improves overall learning of other subjects (Baker, 2006). This study intended to verify these merits in Kakuma refugee camp school, particularly considering that in this context refugee students are required to study English and Kiswahili at the same time that they learn other subjects like Science, Social studies, Mathematics and Religious education at primary school level. Moreover, translanguaging is viewed as both a practice and a process that goes beyond language and linguistics of speakers to a linguistics of participation (Li, 2018). This implies that translanguaging elicits classroom participation and interaction in teaching and learning activity.

The concept of language has attracted debate in understanding translanguaging. In translanguaging studies, language is viewed as something fluid instead of hermetic. In this regard, Li (2018) argues that language is the fluid practice that transcend socially constructed language systems and structures to engage diverse meaning making systems and subjectivity. Makoni and Mashiri (2007) argue that languages are not hermetically sealed units but they leak into one another through seamless multiple identity and language performances. The view of language as fluid and not hermitic underpins the suggestion of this study of recognition of translanguaging in the refugee school language policy.

Li (2018) claims that translanguaging reconceptualizes language as a multilingual, multisensory and multimodal resource for thinking and communicating thought. Translanguaging, therefore, makes an individual aware of the existence of the political entities of named language and empowers him/her to make use of some structural features of named language acquired. The issue of named languages like English, Kiswahili, French, Spanish, Portuguese among others are largely arbitrary hence politically and ideologically charged (Li, 2018). In the same vein, named languages have often been constructed in the process of standardization that leaves out the language practice of minoritized populations (Otheguy et al., 2015). In addition, translanguaging views language as languaging, an avenue for protecting minoritized communities like the refugees and their languages (Otheguy et al., 2015).

Conservatives in the field of second language acquisition for many years have advocated for schools and teachers to separate languages used as LoTL. For instance, in Kenya, students are not allowed to speak their first language in English or Kiswahili lesson. In addition, there are days allocated for using English only and others for Kiswahili. This approach holds the belief that mixing of two languages tends to confuse students hence hinders their learning progress. Further, conservatives in the second language acquisition believe that strict separation of language use is the only way to avoid language contamination (Jacobson and Faltis, 1990). However, García (2009) argues that languages of bilinguals should not be treated as separate entities but should be seen as one linguistic repertoire that bilinguals draw on fully to meet communicative needs. Again, bilinguals or multilinguals in the everyday social interaction move dynamically between named languages, language varieties, styles, registers and writing systems to fulfil specific strategic and communicative functions (Li, 2018). In the same way, translanguaging leverages the fluid language practice of bilingual students to learn deeply and also empowering them to identify when to use what feature for what purpose (Otheguy et al., 2015). Translanguaging as practical theory helps understanding the creative and dynamic practices that students engage in using multiple languages and semiotic and cognitive resources in learning English which is LoTL and Kiswahili which is LoC (Li, 2018).

Translanguaging as a transformative communicative practice explains how individuals and groups use it to move across space and time. This aspect facilitates our understanding on how refugees use translanguaging to overcome language barrier in classroom participation and interaction (Li, 2011; Blackledge and Creese, 2010).

This theoretical approach of translanguaging as pedagogical and communicative strategy helps us show how the use of this strategy can facilitate learning and use of English as a LoTL and Kiswahili as a subject and LoC in the communities.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted a qualitative research approach with focus on a case study. A case study gives a complete description of a phenomenon or intervention within its natural context using multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2003). This study is a case study because it was an investigation of translanguaging in the teaching and learning of English and Kiswahili in a typical refugee camp school in Kakuma refugee camp in North Western part of Kenya. The case study design was suitable in exploring translanguaging practice in the refugee camp school setting since there was no control over the participants and activities inside and outside the classroom. Using case study, we explored how teachers draw on refugee students' linguistics repertoires in the refugee camp school.

The participants in this study were refugee students in lower and upper primary, teachers of English and Kiswahili, and the headteacher of Fanaka primary school (pseudonym) in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. The total number of refugee students who participated in this study was 1,595. From the total sample, 36 students were interviewed. Those interviewed were from the Somali and South Sudanese communities. The refugee students were sampled from the lower primary classes consisted of grades 1, 2 and 3 and upper primary grades 4 and 5. The lower grades were selected because the students were the new cohort who had not developed mastery of English and Kiswahili while those in upper grades had just moved from lower primary and had developed mastery of English and Kiswahili than those students in lower primary. Also the choice of students in grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 was informed by the fact that those grades were under the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC), which focuses on acquisition of competencies in the subject matter and in this case English and Kiswahili. Seven teachers teaching English and/or Kiswahili in grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 were selected. They were four female and three male teachers. These teachers were chosen based on the language they taught, professional qualification, teaching experience in the school, and their nationality. The names used are pseudonyms.

**Table 1: Demographic Data of Teachers**

Name	Gender	Nationality	Qualification	Teaching subject	Grade
Halima	F	Sudanese	P1 certificate	English/ Kiswahili	1
Kavindu	F	Kenyan	P1 certificate	English / Kiswahili	2
Emeri	M	Sudanese	Diploma	English / Kiswahili	3
Bahati	M	Kenyan	P1 certificate	Kiswahili	4
Kipande	M	Sudanese	Diploma	English	4
Zubeda	F	Sudanese	P1 certificate	English	5
Zawadi	F	Kenyan	P1 certificate	Kiswahili	5

The headteacher had been teaching Mathematics in Fanaka for 12 years. He was from the host community.

Multiple sources of data were used to corroborate and augment evidence from multiple sources (Yin, 2003). In this respect, different data collection techniques such as observation, interviews and documents review were used to achieve triangulation of data and evidence from multiple sources. Triangulation of data increased the trustworthiness of the study.

Thematic analysis approach was used to analyse the data. Thematic analysis is a qualitative analytic approach for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) emerging from the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Six analysis phases proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) were followed to identify theme of translanguaging practice and subthemes of codemixing, use of students' L1, translation and interpretation from the observation, focus group interviews, unstructured interviews and semi-structured interviews data. The six phases followed are: familiarising with data, searching of initial codes of the emerging themes, searching for themes, reviewing of themes, defining and naming of themes, and finally subdividing the themes. Thematic analysis helped us identify, organise and describe emerging themes within the data sets that were relevant to the research question and objectives.

The findings of this study indicate that translanguaging is used in the teaching and learning of English and Kiswahili in the refugee camp school. However, the teachers do not effectively utilise the potential of translanguaging as a teaching pedagogy in their lessons. The specific findings are reported under the following themes: codeswitching, use of students' L1 and translation.

The analysis of the observation data indicate that teachers and students use codeswitching in the teaching and learning of English which is LoTL and Kiswahili which is LoC.

A typical example of use of codeswitching is illustrated in Excerpt 1 below, taken from a grade 4 English lesson. The topic of the lesson was the use of article *a* or *an*. The objective was that by the end of the lesson the students were expected to use the *a* or *an* correctly.

Excerpt # 1: Codeswitching in grade 4 English lesson

- 1 T: Good morning class.
- 2 SS: Good morning teacher.
- 3 T: *Leo tutasoma* (today we will learn) use of article *a* or *an*. Say article *a* or *an*...
- 4 SS: Article *a* or *an*.
- 5 T: *Ukiona* (if you see) word *inaanza kwa* (start with) *a, e, i, o, u*, for example, elephant. So answer *itakuwa* (will be) an apple, an egg, an orange, an ice cream. *Nani atatupa* example *nyingine?* (Who can give us another example?)  
An umbrella.  
Very good. Clap for him. Now if words start with others like *b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y* and *z*, *utatumia* (you will use) article *a*. Are together.
- 6 S: *m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y* and *z*, *utatumia* (you will use) article *a*. Are together.
- 7 T: Class *tuko pamoja* (are we together)?
- 8 SS: *Ndio* (yes) teacher.
- 9 T: *Kesho sitaki kusikia mtu akisema ameforget*. (Tomorrow I do not want to hear someone saying I have forgotten).

As illustrated in this excerpt, the teacher uses codeswitching to introduce the lesson (line 3) to communicate the content of the lesson and also to explain when to use articles *an* (line 5) and *a* (line 7). By using codeswitching, the teacher is able to communicate and enable the students to infer meaning in the lesson (Gracia, 2009). Similarly, the teacher uses codeswitching to engage students in the lesson by asking them questions (lines 5 and 7), hence eliciting students' participation in the lesson. This analysis supports the findings of other studies that demonstrate that translanguaging fosters classroom participation (Chambo, 2018). Moreover, the teacher uses codeswitching to summarise the lesson (line 9) with the aim of confirming if the students have understood the content of the lesson. Had the students not understood the lesson, they could have asked for clarification.

The next excerpt shows codeswitching in a grade 5 Kiswahili lesson. The lesson was on the use of capital letters.

Excerpt # 2: Codeswitching in a grade 5 Kiswahili lesson

- 1 T: *Leo tutajifunza matumizi ya* capital letters. (Today we are going to learn about the use of capital letters).
- 2 S1: Teacher, capital letters *ndio nini?* (What are capital letters?)
- 3 T: *Herufi kubwa ndio* capital letters *kwa* English (Yes, it is capital letters in English. *Herufi kubwa hutumiwa mwanzoni wa sentensi, jina kamili ya watu, nchi, mlima.* Class *tuko pamoja?* (Capital letters are used starting a sentence, real name of people, countries, mountains. Class are we together?)
- 3 SS: Yes *mwalimu* (Teacher).
- 4 T: *Nani atatumpa matumizi mengine ya* capital letters? (Who can give us other uses of capital letters?)
- 5 S2: *Wakati unaanza kuandika jina la lake* (Used when beginning to write the proper name of the lake). *Kwa mfano* (for example) Lake Turkana.
- 6 T: *Vizuri. Lake kwa Kiswahili ni Ziwa. Sasa fanyeni hilo zoezi liko page 94.* (Good. Lake in Kiswahili is Ziwa. Now, do the exercise in page 94).

In the excerpt above, the teacher uses codeswitching in the introduction of the lesson (line 1). The use of codeswitching by the teacher prompts the student to ask him a question (line 2). This indicates that codeswitching has motivated classroom participation which is very important in the teaching and learning activity. The teacher also uses codeswitching to seek clarification or ascertain if the students

are following the lesson (line 3). The teacher also uses codeswitching to elicit students' participation in the lesson through asking questions (line 4) and students answering the questions (line 5). Then the teacher gives the correct answer in Kiswahili (line 6). The act of students responding to questions demonstrates that students understood the content of the lesson. This analysis supports the argument advanced by Baker (2003) that students internalise new ideas in one language and process them in the other languages to hasten their understanding. Finally, the teacher uses codeswitching to give instruction to students (line 6). In other words, the teacher is using codeswitching to communicate to students on what to do. This is in consistent with studies on codeswitching which assert that codeswitching is a communicative strategy in the classroom (Macaro, 2005; Chibutane, 2013).

Similarly, the semi-structured interview transcript of grade 3 teacher of English and Kiswahili below corroborates the use of codeswitching in the teaching of English and Kiswahili in Kakuma refugee camp.

Excerpt # 3: Interview with grade 3 teacher of English and Kiswahili on the use of codeswitching.

- 1 EL: How often do you use codeswitching in your English or Kiswahili lessons?
- 2 T: Most of the time I use a mixture of languages in class. You see *mwalimu* (Teacher), when I use only one language like English, these students will not get anything. The only thing I do not encourage the students is to mix languages in writing.
- 3 EL: Why do a mixture of languages is not allowed in writing?
- 4 T: You know, mixture of languages is not allowed in writing examination. Therefore, the students need to write in English only in English assignment or examination. The same applies to Kiswahili. But you will sometimes find students writing Kiswahili word in English homework or English in Kiswahili homework.
- 5 EL: In your lesson plan, do you plan to use a mixture of languages?
- 6 T: I do not plan use of mixture of languages. It somethings that happen naturally. Even now as we talk you can find yourself shifting from one language to another.

In this episode, the teacher acknowledged the use of codeswitching in making students understand the content of the lesson (line 2). Therefore, in this context codeswitching is used as teaching pedagogy to foster students' understanding of the subject matter. This finding supports the argument that codeswitching is an aspect of translanguaging that enables bilinguals to develop deep understanding of the subject matter (Velasco and Gracia, 2014). However, codeswitching is not allowed in writing assignment or examination (line 3) and the teacher does not plan for codeswitching during lesson planning (line 4). By discouraging the use of codeswitching in writing, it contradicts previous studies that have demonstrated the use of translanguaging in fostering academic writing. For instance, Velasco and García (2014) explored the use of translanguaging in academic writing and they found out that children who use translanguaging perform better than those who use one language. In fact, discouraging the use of codeswitching, makes students feel marginalised or as failures because of being unable to express themselves in the target language used in the lesson (Cenoz and Gorter, 2011). Therefore, there is need for teachers to allow students to use codeswitching in writing their assignment and in that way the students will improve in writing skills.

The findings in this episode that the teacher does not allow codeswitching in writing and not planning to use codeswitching in the lesson, indicate that teachers are not using translanguaging strategically as a pedagogy in teaching and learning of English and / or Kiswahili lesson.

Another evidential data that indicate the use of codeswitching was from the focus group interview with grade 1, 2, and 3 students, as illustrated below:

Excerpt # 4: Interview with grade 1, 2 and 3 students on the use of codeswitching in the English and Kiswahili lessons.

	Kiswahili	English
1	EL: <i>Mnaweza kunieleza ni wakati ngani mchanganya lugha darasani.</i>	Can you tell me when you use codeswitching in class?
2	S1: <i>Tunachanganya lugha mara nyingi darasani kwa ili kukuelewa kwa mfano mfano kama hujui neno la Kiingereza utatumia Kiswahili.</i>	We use a mixture of languages most of the time. For example, when you do not know a word in English, you use Kiswahili.
3	S2: <i>Mwalimu akitumia lugha moja hatuwezi kuelewa.</i>	When the teacher uses one language, we do not understand well.
4	S3: <i>Mimi huchanganya lugha kama nataka kuuliza mwalimu. Unajua kama hujui kuongea Kiingereza vizuri hutaogopa kuuliza swali kwa sababu watu watakucheka.</i>	I mix languages when I want to ask the teacher something. When you do not speak English well, you fear to ask a question in English because you fear people will laugh at you when you speak bad English.
5	S4: <i>Tunachanganya lugha wakati tunataka kuwasiliana na labda hatujui lugha vizuri..</i>	We mix languages when we want to communicate, especially when we do not speak the language well.

In this excerpt, students' responses indicate that they use codeswitching most of the time to enable them understand what they are learning in the lesson (lines 2 and 3). Similarly, students use codeswitching when they want to ask questions in class (line 4). The students' responses show that codeswitching empowers them to participate fully in the teaching and learning activity in the classroom (Park, 2013). Also students use codeswitching to enhance communication (line 4). Communication is key in the teaching and learning activity since it facilitates the understanding of the subject matter. Thus codeswitching enables students to meet their communicative needs in the teaching and learning activity in the classroom (Beres, 2015; Gorsjean, 1985).

The findings indicate that teachers only elicit the L1 of their students when they want to reinforce the learning of certain vocabulary, especially in the lower grades. The following excerpt, taken from a focus group interview with students in grade 1, 2 and 3, points to the use of the students' L1 in the teaching and learning of English and Kiswahili.

Excerpt # 5: Focus group interview with grade 1, 2 and 3 students on the use of their L1 in the English or Kiswahili lessons.

	Swahili	English
1	EL: <i>Je, walimu huwaruhusu kutumia lugha ya nyumbani darasani?</i>	Do your teachers allow the use of L1 in the lesson?
2	S1: <i>Mwalimu huturusu tu kutumia lugha yetu ya nyumbani wakati mtu haelewi kitu kwa Kiswahili au English.</i>	Teachers allow us to use L1 if there is a student who do not understand Kiswahili or English.
3	S2: <i>Darasani haturusiwe kuongea lugha yetu ya kwanza isipokuwa wakati mwalimu anauliza kitu fulani inaitwaje kwa lugha yetu.</i>	In our class, we are not allowed to speak our L1. We only use L1 when the teacher asks us to name something in our language.
4	S3: <i>Wakati huelewi kitu mzuri wengine wanasema huuliza Rafiki yako akueleze kwa lugha yako.</i>	When you do not understand something, the teacher can tell you to ask your friend in your language.

This excerpt illustrates that students' L1 is used to facilitate students understanding (line 2). The use of students' L1 as indicated in this excerpt, point out that teachers draw on their students' L1 so as to foster understanding of the subject matter. Indeed, studies have supported the use of L1 in

enhancing students' deep understanding of the subject matter taught since students are able to make connection on what they know using their L1 (Baker, 2006). However, students are not allowed to speak their L1 in class unless the teacher asks them the name of something in their L1 (line 3). The strategy of teachers allowing students to use their L1 when they want them to name something, suggests, on one hand, strategic use of L1 to foster learning of the L2. On the other hand, when teachers discourage their students to use their L1, students feel marginalised and insecure because of their inability to use the target language used in the teaching and learning in the classroom (Cenoz and Gorter, 2011). Moreover, students use their L1 in peer learning (line 4). Peer learning is effective since students share knowledge effectively hence develop deep understanding of the content of the lesson. Students using their L1 in peer learning is in agreement with the argument put forward by García and Sylan (2011) who maintain that successful bilingual education is the one that involves purposeful engagement of teachers and students from different multilingual and multicultural background.

The next excerpt illustrates the teachers view on the use of students' L1.

Excerpt # 6: Interview with a grade 2 teacher of English and Kiswahili on the use of students' L1

- 1 EL How often do you allow students to use their L1 in the teaching and learning activity in your class? If not, why?
- 2 T Not all the time but when there is a new student who does not understand Kiswahili or English, that prompts me to seek the help of some of the students to explain that new student in their L1.

The above excerpt implies that the teacher elicits the use of students' L1 to help students understand the subject matter. The use of students' L1 enables the new student to infer meaning in the lesson and develop understanding of the subject matter. Therefore, the use of students' L1 in the teaching and learning of English and Kiswahili illustrates the use of translanguaging as a last resource when the student does not understand the subject matter (Otheguy et al., 2015).

### Translation

The analysis of both classroom observations and teachers' interviews show that teachers use translation in English and or/ Kiswahili lesson. Teachers use translation to help students infer meaning of in the teaching and learning of English and Kiswahili.

Excerpt # 7: A grade 4 English lesson on irregular adjectives

- 1 T: Today we are going to learn about irregular verbs ... Say irregular adjectives.
- 2 SS: Say irregular adjectives.
- 3 T: [Laughs] *Nasema hivi kwamba tunasoma kuhusu irregular verbs.* (I am saying we are learning about irregular adjectives. *Kwa mfano Good better best. Tazama hapa* [Writing on the chalkboard] *Good ni mzuri, better ni mzuri kiasi, i na best mzuri kabisa.* Another example is bad (*mbaya kiasi*), worse *ni mbaya kiasi na worst ni mbaya kabisa.* Are we together class? Who give us another example? *Nani atatupa mfano mwingine?*
- 4 S1: Little, less, least.
- 5 T: Very good. Little *ni kidogo*, less *ni kidogo kiasi*, na least *ni kidogo kabisa.* Can we get another example? *Tunaweza kupata mwingine?*
- 6 S2: Many, more, most.
- 7 T: Well done. Many *ni nyingi*, more *ni nyingi kiasi na most ni nyingi sana.* Do exercises 1, 2 and 4. *Nasema fanyeni exercise 1, 2 na 4.*



In this excerpt, the teacher uses translation to facilitate students' understanding (line 2), to motivate students to participate in the lesson by asking them a question (line 3) and to give instructions (line 7). The use of translation in this lesson illustrates that teacher resorted to translation only when he realized that the students did not understand the content of the lesson during the introduction. Therefore, it can be argued that the teacher used translation to foster understanding and activate students' participation even though he did not prepare in advance. The unplanned use of translation in this excerpt by the teacher in the same way as unplanned codeswitching in excerpt 3 demonstrate that teachers are not using translanguaging strategically as a teaching pedagogy .

Excerpt# 8: Interview with a grade 3 teacher of English and Kiswahili on the use of translation

- 1 EL: How often do you use translation in your lessons?
- 2 T: Most of the times I use translation in the lessons so that my students can understand. You see the new students from South Sudan and Somalia don't understand English. So I have to use Arabic for them to understand what we are talking about in the lesson.
- 3 EL: Do you plan in advance in your lesson to use translation? If no, why?
- 4 T: I do not put translation in my lesson plan since it is not one of the teaching pedagogy in recognise in the curriculum. In fact, even in college we were never told that it is a teaching pedagogy although it helps in teaching these students.

In this excerpt, translation is used to enhance understanding (line 2). In fact, the teacher uses Arabic in the translation to make the students understand English. This demonstrate that the teacher uses translation to enable students meet their communicative needs (Beres, 2015). However, the teacher does not plan to use translation in the lesson in the same way he does not plan for codeswitching as illustrated in excerpt 3 since it is not considered as a teaching pedagogy taught in the teaching training college (line 4). The claim by the teacher for not planning to use translation in advance because it is not a legitimate teaching pedagogy recognized in the teacher training colleges, limits the effective use of translanguaging in fostering teaching and learning of English and Kiswahili in Kakuma refugee camp school. Thus the claims of translation not a teaching pedagogy recognized in teacher education contradict the notion of translanguaging as a teaching pedagogy that enhance social justice of language minorities in the society (Gracia, 2013).

Excerpt # 9: Interview with the headteacher on teachers' translation in teaching of English and Kiswahili

- 1 EL: What language do your teachers use to explain homework to students in lower grades?
- 2 HT: We encourage our teachers to use translation, especially in English lessons, since most of our students face a lot of challenges in English. Our curriculum stipulates that teachers should use the local language of the catchment area. In our case it is difficult to use the local language of the host community since our students are from different multicultural groups. Most of the times our teacher use Kiswahili, which is the national language, to translate English passages or explain English homework to the students.

This interview transcript shows that Kiswahili is used to enhance translation in English lesson and communication (line 2). Translation in this case is tailored towards meeting education and communicative needs of students who do not understand English or Kiswahili in the refugee camp school. In fact, translation is bridging the gap between multilingual students in Kakuma refugee camp school.

The two interviews transcripts above imply that translation used in the teaching of English and Kiswahili is tailored towards helping the students in meaning making in the lesson. This finding is consistent with the argument put forward Garcia (2011) that translation is part of translanguaging since it is aimed at helping students to infer meaning in the teaching and learning activity. Similarly, in this study it was found that translation is used to give instructions, for instance when giving

homework. For the instruction to be effective, there must be communication, which is facilitated through the use of translation.

In this study, translation practice is examined on the lens of translanguaging theory, as teaching practice tailored towards helping the students to infer meaning making and enhance deep understanding in the teaching and learning of English and Kiswahili, rather than the usual rendering of meaning of text from source language to target language (Cook, 2010). As a matter of fact, translation as approached on the lens of translanguaging shows that it is a cognitive process involving two languages tailored towards meeting education needs of the students, that is aimed at attaining deep understanding of the subject matter (William, 1996; García, 2017).

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study have showed that teachers in Kakuma refugee camp school use translanguaging in the teaching and learning of English and Kiswahili. The teachers draw on their students entire linguistic repertoires in the teaching and learning of English and Kiswahili through codeswitching, use of students' L1 and translations which are forms of translanguaging practice. However, the teachers do not make fully use of translanguaging as a teaching pedagogy. For instance, students are not allowed to use codeswitching in writing. Similarly, teachers do not plan to use translanguaging in their lesson plan since they do not consider translanguaging as a teaching pedagogy. The claim by teachers that translanguaging is not a teaching pedagogy may be a consequence of what they are taught in teacher training colleges. In fact, one of the teachers in this study argued that they were not taught in teachers training college that translanguaging is a teaching pedagogy.

Drawing from translanguaging theory, the findings of this study indicate that teachers and students use translanguaging in the teaching and learning of English and Kiswahili to enhance meaning making, deep understanding and activating classroom participation and interaction (García, 2009; Creese and Blackledge, 2015). Similarly, translanguaging helps students to transcend socially constructed named languages. This supports the tenets of translanguaging theory that languages are fluid and not hermetically sealed units (García, Makoni and Mashiri, 2007). Moreover, students use multiple languages creatively through codeswitching, use of students' LI and translation, which are translanguaging practices, to move across linguistics space to shape communication and participate in the teaching and learning of English and Kiswahili (Li, 2011; Blackledge and Creese, 2020).

These findings are consistent with the findings of other studies, which advocate the use of translanguaging in helping refugee students learn new languages used in education and communication in host countries (Yilmaz, 2019; Dryden-Peterson, 2015; Viegen, 2020). It is worth noting, however, that while in most of the studies carried outside Africa, refugee students were learning one language only, those in this study were learning two languages, that is, English as LoTL and Kiswahili as LoC.

### **Conclusion**

This study explores how teachers draw on their students' linguistic repertoire in the teaching and learning of English and Kiswahili. The study has shown that teachers use translanguaging in the teaching and learning of English and Kiswahili in Kakuma refugee camp school in Kenya, although they do not fully use translanguaging as teaching pedagogy.

The findings of this study may inform the concrete language-in-education policy by proposing the recognition of translanguaging as a legitimate teaching pedagogy and communicative practice in the Kenya education system, as a whole, and in the refugee camp schools in particular. This may benefit refugee students, teachers and other humanitarian workers working in the education section of the refugees. Further, translanguaging practice can be incorporated in pre- and in-service teacher education, particularly targeting teachers in refugee schools in Kenya.

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