Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies

ISSN: 1607-3614 (Print) 1727-9461 (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rall20

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Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies 2016, 34(3): 197–209

SOUTHERN AFRICAN LINGUISTICS AND APPLIED LANGUAGE STUDIES
ISSN 1607-3614 EISSN 1727-9461
http://dx.doi.org/10.2989/16073614.2016.1250357

Translanguaging as a class/lecture-room language management strategy in multilingual contexts: Insights from autoethnographic snapshots from Kenya and South Africa

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Abstract: The article explores complementary aspects of two nascent developments in (socio) linguistics, namely translanguaging and language management using auto-ethnographic snapshots from class/lecture-room contexts in Kenya and South Africa. Translanguaging entails recognition of a full account of speakers' discursive resources, which posits that 'languages are not sealed units with distinguishable boundaries, nor are they capable of being forced into boxes'. Instead, languages overlap one another in a continuum of discursive resources that are naturally available to multilingual speakers. Language management, on its part, is defined as a paradigm in the sociology and politics of language that seeks to achieve and deepen theoretical adequacy of language policy and planning epistemology and its application(s), especially in multilingual settings, with a view of developing and deploying optimal frameworks and strategies that harness and optimise language resources in society, with the ultimate aim of enlarging people's choices. In line with an extensive corpus of literature that indicates that translanguaging optimises linguistic repertoires of interlocutors, especially in multilingual contexts, the discussion argues that this core character of translanguaging aligns it with the epistemic nexus of language management. The discussion tests and validates this core hypothesis through three autoethnographic snapshots from Kenya and South Africa.

Introduction

In recent years, education systems, probably because of the important formative and distributive roles they play in society generally and in emerging economies of the global South specifically, have come under increasing critical focus from a mix of policy makers, researchers and education practitioners (cf. Psacharopoulos & Patrinos 2004; Barro & Lee 2013). In this surge of interest, legitimate as it is, an aspect of education systems in emerging economies has received scant attention from the above mix. This aspect includes classroom practices and pedagogies, generally, and classroom language practices and pedagogies, specifically, especially in multilingual contexts of the developing world. Yet, and without understating the magnitude of the crises facing education systems generally in the multilingual contexts of the developing world, it is often lost in the mix of policy makers, researchers and education practitioners that a large part of the crises facing education systems is traceable to sub-optimal classroom language practices and pedagogies in the multilingual contexts of the developing world (cf. Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004; De Oliveira 2014). Instructively, these sub-optimal language practices and pedagogies are not only pervasive in lower levels of education systems, but throughout entire education systems up to university level. Effectively, there is a knowledge hiatus on optimal language practices and pedagogies in multilingual contexts at policy, research and practice levels. This article contributes to ending this hiatus by exploring the potential of translanguaging as an optimal class/lecture-room strategy. To this end, the discussion adopts a language-management perspective that is mainly concerned with the development and deployment of optimal frameworks and strategies that harness and optimise language resources in society with the ultimate aim of enlarging people's choices—in this case, optimisation of teacher and learner choices in pursuit of epistemic access.

The discussion is presented in four parts. The first part outlines an a priori note on method derived from the theoretical insights in the following section and the researcher's insights gained from a professional career in the languages and literacy education terrain in Africa over the last two decades. The second part, as a way of providing theoretical scaffolding for the entire discussion, presents an overview of core concepts in translanguaging and language management. The third part presents illustrative snapshots of intersections of translanguaging and language management in class/lecture-room contexts in multilingual contexts from Kenya and South Africa. The fourth part, drawing from the snapshots just presented, explores the interfaces between translanguaging and language management, as well as stating the case for translanguaging as a class/lecture-room language management strategy in multilingual contexts. This part also presents the conclusions.

A note on method

Methodology—especially with regard to choice, appropriateness and validity—in the sociology and politics of language, educational linguistics included, is fraught with great difficulty and complexity (cf. Johnstone 2000; Milroy & Gordon 2003; Blommaert 2014). Part of this difficulty is attributable to the complex convergence of so many variables in any study that seeks to interrogate the sociology and politics of language dynamics. The other difficulty is attributable to the (over) reliance of the sociology and politics of language research on methods developed in other disciplines, notably sociology, anthropology, philosophy, economics and decision sciences (Mwaniki 2010: 77). Yet, the referenced difficulty and complexity has not necessarily been bad for the sociology and politics of language research, generally, and educational linguistics research, specifically. On the contrary, this difficulty and complexity and its attendant requirement for combinations of techniques has contributed immensely to the development of research methods in the sub-disciplines under reference in line with an observation by Gass and Mackey (2011: 2–3) that "indeed, creative uses and combinations of techniques from a range of areas are often appropriate and necessary both to triangulate data and to move research forward". In the sociology and politics of language—educational linguistics included—an area in which research has moved into is the use of ethnographic approaches, generally (cf. Foley 2002), and "autoethnography—a blend of autobiography and ethnography" (Paltridge & Phakiti 2011: 61), specifically.

The research reported is anchored in autoethnography as a method. Autoethnography readily blends with the notions of courageous research because, in the words of Ellis and Bochner (2006: 433), it

> *shows struggle, passion, embodied life, and the collaborative creation of sense-making in situations in which people have to cope with dire circumstances and loss of meaning. Autoethnography wants the reader to care, to feel, to empathise, and to do something, to act. It needs the researcher to be vulnerable and intimate. Intimacy is a way of being, a mode of caring, and it shouldn't be used as a vehicle to produce distanced theorising.*

The "struggle, passion, embodied life and commitment to collaborative sense-making in situations where people have to cope with dire circumstances and loss of meaning" are apparent in the discussion, especially in its attempts to outline how translanguaging as a language management strategy seeks to harness and optimise linguistic repertoires of mentors and learners in multilingual settings, where much of the time non-official, non-school languages are not recognised and used as resources for learning and epistemic access. However, the specific brand of autoethnography that was used in the research reported in this article extends beyond the confines of traditional autoethnography, and for good reasons. The brand under reference is analytic autoethnography, which has five key features: (a) complete member researcher (CMR); (b) analytic reflexivity; (c) narrative visibility of the researcher's self; (d) dialogue with informants beyond the self; and (e) commitment to theoretical analysis (Anderson 2006: 378).

The research reported in this article satisfies all these features of analytic autoethnography. First, the researcher is a complete member researcher. The researcher has been a student, teacher and researcher in and of the language education and language in education world for a lifetime since starting schooling some four decades ago. Second, the researcher acknowledges the reciprocal influence that different settings and informants have played in continuously shaping critical understandings of the contestations and contradictions attendant to language education and language in education in Africa in both theory and practice. In particular, the researcher acknowledges the rare privilege of being a child of many worlds; worlds that are in constant dialogue with each other throughout a stellar educational and professional life. Third, throughout the article, there is enhanced textual visibility of the researcher's self. However, this anonymity is not in any way used to obscure the researcher's personal engagement in the language education and language in education world under study. On the contrary, the nuanced balance between the researcher's textual visibility and anonymity is used to develop and refine theoretical understandings of the complexities attendant to language education and language in education in class/lecture-room situations in the complexly multilingual contexts of Africa. Fourth, the article is a product of dialogue with data and others beyond the researcher. In particular, the article critically engages with literature on translanguaging and language management. This literature lies beyond the intellectual outputs of the researcher. Further, the autoethnographic snapshots presented in the article are products of conversations with informants beyond the self, because learning is both a collaborative and dialogical endeavour. Finally, the article does not (simply) set out to document personal experiences and provide insider's perspectives of the researcher with an objective of evoking emotional resonance with the reader. On the contrary, the article uses lived experiences by the researcher—in conversation with other informants in the snapshots and an extended corpus of academic literature—to tease out broader theoretical insights into language education and language in education than those provided by the snapshots themselves. In particular, the broader insights the article seeks to illuminate concern themselves with how translanguaging can optimise both teacher and learner language choices in pursuit of epistemic access.

Translanguaging: *Tour d'horizon* of a nascent discourse in (educational) linguistics

Due to the 'newness' and 'developing' nature of translanguaging in research and scholarship, the current discussion refers to this languaging practice as a nascent discourse in (educational) linguistics. The term 'educational' is parenthesised because advances in research on translanguaging increasingly point to applicability of its core principles beyond educational settings. Lewis, Jones and Baker (2012: 641) provide an apt overview of the development of scholarly discourse on translanguaging by submitting that the term is a relatively new and developing one in (educational) linguistics because it was first used as a Welsh word in schools in Wales in the 1980s by Cen Williams (1994) and popularised by two leading scholars, Colin Baker and Ofelia García, through their seminal treatises on bilingualism and bilingual education, *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* and *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century*, respectively. Originally, it was conceptualised as a 'process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages' (Lewis, Jones & Baker 2012: 641). Since these incipient formulations, theorising on translanguaging has transcended the original conceptualisation to include what Lasagabaster and García (2014: 558, 559) conceptualise as 'multiple discursive practices…that go beyond the traditional concept of bilingualism as it seeks to include the minority language and its community, ensuring that they are not kept separate and that the different languages of instruction are not seen as competing", thereby opening up interesting epistemological and praxis opportunities in the frontiers of multilingualism. In cognisance of this new brave world of multilingualism that theorising on translanguaging is venturing into, overall, the current discussion adopts an approach to translanguaging which places multilingualism at the nexus of this languaging practice. Wei's (2011) characterisation of translanguaging is one such approach. According to Wei (2011: 1223),

> *[t]ranslanguaging is both going between different linguistic structures and systems, including different modalities (speaking, writing, signing, listening, reading, remembering) and going beyond them. It includes the full range of linguistic performances of multilingual language users for purposes that transcend the combination of structures, the alternation between systems, the transmission of information and the representation of values, identities and relationships. The act of translanguaging then is transformative in nature; it creates a social space for the multilingual language user by bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment, their attitude, belief and ideology,*

> *their cognitive and physical capacity into one coordinated and meaningful performance, and making it into a lived experience.*

Another such approach is the one developed by Makalela (2015a: 202) in which

> *[t]ranslanguaging is premised on the recognition of a full account of speakers' discursive resources, and it posits that languages are not hermetically sealed units with distinguishable boundaries, nor are they capable of being placed in boxes. Instead, languages overlap one another in a continuum of discursive resources that are naturally available to multilingual speakers.*

A core concept in emergent theorising on translanguaging is what Makalela (2015b: 16) refers as 'linguistic fluidity', in which this languaging practice is a 'social practice that…includes all metadiscursive regimes that are performed by all multilingual speakers in their everyday way of making sense of the world around them' (Makalela 2015b: 16–17). Notions of linguistic fluidity and inclusive metalinguistic regimes that are performed by all multilingual speakers make translanguaging applicable to multilingual educational contexts. This view is echoed by Madiba (2014: 74), who documents that, in multilingual contexts, translanguaging 'resolves the tension that is often observed between "students" heterogeneous life-world reality and an institutionally maintained ideal of single, holistic and unitary language which tends to exclude the existing linguistic resources that students bring into the academic learning environments', while allowing 'multilingual speakers to intentionally integrate local and academic discourse as a form of resistance, re-appropriation and/or transformation of academic discourse', that in 'concept literacy, enables students to develop their own voice and engage critically with academic concepts rather than learning definitions by rote'. In sum, in multilingual contexts, translanguaging optimises linguistic repertoires of interlocutors in a myriad spectrum of discursive practices and events. The notion of 'optimisation' in translanguaging represents a site for intersections with language management theorising and practice. To bring these intersections to the fore, the next section outlines the core principles of language management.

Language management: An emergent paradigm in the sociology and politics of language theorising and practice

There are three major scholarly traditions in language management, namely the Israeli/American tradition, the European/Asia-Pacific tradition, and the African tradition (Mwaniki 2011b; Nekvapil & Sherman 2015). Superficially, the three traditions share certain commonalities. The salient ones include:

- Evolution in a peculiar context since the 1980s. In the sociology and politics of language research, this context was marked by an increasing realisation of the epistemological limitations of the language policy and planning paradigm;
- Appreciation of the pervasive and intractable nature of language-related challenges and how these challenges are woven into a web of societal undertakings from the technological, organisational, cultural, social, economic and political; and
- An impulse within the academy to respond to the epistemological limitations of the language policy and planning paradigm, and an impulse within policy circles to respond to practical concerns.

However, an analysis of the key assumptions underlying each of the three traditions from an anthropology of knowledge perspective, in the sense espoused by Elkana (1981), shows that the commonalities among the three traditions end at the superficial level. At a deeper level, the Israeli/American tradition and the European/Asia-Pacific traditions are deeply embedded into the larger Northern epistemology, generally, and (Eurocentric) diffusionism, specifically (Blaut 1993), whereas at a deeper level, the African tradition is deeply embedded in 'knowledges beyond Northern epistemologies' which are a confluence of 'new critical theory and new emancipatory practices' (De Sousa Santos, Nunes & Meneses 2007: xix).

Any diligent and critical student of history, generally, and historiography, specifically, would aptly point out the tenuity of Northern epistemologies, generally, and Eurocentric diffusionism, specifically. In fidelity with this diligence, critical scholarship, in a commitment to guard against the arrogance of Northern epistemologies and monoculture of scientific knowledge, generally, and Eurocentric diffusionism arrogance, specifically, as manifest in the Israeli/American and the European/Asia-Pacific traditions of language management, the African tradition has posed what two of the luminaries of the European/Asia-Pacific tradition, Jiří Nekvapil and Tamah Sherman, have acknowledged to be 'provocative questions…above all epistemological ones' (Nekvapil & Sherman 2015: 5). In a typical display of the arrogance of Northern epistemologies and Eurocentric diffusionism, as well as monoculture of scientific knowledge as already pointed out, however, these two leading lights of the European/Asian-Pacific tradition do not attempt to answer or engage with the questions posed by the African tradition, but rather chose to dismiss the African tradition—with a little help from another Northern-based scholar, Orman (2013)—as being 'formulated on a very general level, hence it appears to be little more than an ambitious program, a prolegomena for a future theory' (Nekvapil & Sherman 2015: 5). Admittedly, this approach to scholarship, though not surprising, is deeply problematic for the future of language management scholarship because it not only stifles academic and intellectual engagement across intellectual traditions, but fundamentally because it seeks to foist supremacy of some traditions over others with little regard for the kind of data and agency that the other traditions have to contend with. In contrast to this cavalier approach of the European/Asian-Pacific tradition, the African tradition does not only acknowledge the other two traditions, it borrows substantially from their theorising. It is through the attendant symbiosis with these other two traditions that the African tradition poses fundamental questions of an epistemological nature to the other traditions with a view to addressing what are apparent weaknesses in these other traditions. The questions under reference are of such a fundamental nature that there is no escaping (from answering) them for the two other language management traditions. Further, and in direct relation to the principles of translanguaging explored in the current discussion, these questions and the epistemological weaknesses they point out in the two traditions serve as red flags as to why these two traditions may not hold much promise for language-management situations, generally, and language management in education situations, specifically, especially in a global South defined by pervasive multilingualism. A snapshot of the questions under reference is provided in the following brief exposition.

To the Israeli/American tradition of language management, the African tradition poses the following questions, paraphrased from Mwaniki (2011b: 247–248):

- What are the non-language variables co-varying with language variables in language management situations that this tradition alludes to but does not specify?
- Inasmuch as the notion of 'domain' as introduced into sociolinguistics by Fishman (1972) is admittedly central in this tradition's theorising, on what theory is the notion of domain based or is the assumption that the notion of domain in itself constitutes a theory?
- What methodological approaches and advances would the foundational theory, on which the notion of the domain is based, presuppose?

The Israeli/American tradition has not made any attempt at answering these questions or attending to the epistemological gaps identified in its formulation by the African tradition.

To the European/Asia-Pacific tradition of language management, the African tradition poses the following questions, paraphrased and cited from Mwaniki (2011b: 251):

- Language Management Theory's (LMT)—which is the core of this tradition—formulation of the 'generative–corrective' dyad is based on a contradiction. Effectively, how does this tradition propose to solve its internal inconsistency occasioned by positioning the 'generative–corrective' dyad at its core?
- Further, why do deviations [choices] occur in discourse and what theory can be used to account for deviations [choices] in discourse, and in the process, formulate appropriate methodologies to study them?
- This tradition's position that Conversational Analysis (CA) could serve as a theory attenuates its epistemological base, for CA is not a theory but a method. The question that arises is: On what theory is CA based?
- Suppose this tradition's core premise of 'language correction' was applied to standard language, L2, L3…Lη acquisition and learning scenarios and not to native speaker scenarios, to what extent and in what settings would the notion of 'language correction' hold as valid?
- Why does this tradition seem content to point out theories that it should communicate with, but eschews investing intellectual effort to explore the promise that these theories hold for language management theory?

The European/Asia-Pacific tradition of language management has either failed to answer these questions or ignored them altogether, their germane epistemological nature notwithstanding. Yet, failure to attend to the weaknesses pointed out by these questions make these two traditions of language management singularly unsuitable for the study, analysis and management of language, especially in multilingual settings in general, and in applied situations like language education and language in education, specifically.

Paradoxically, the centrepiece of the Israeli/American tradition, namely 'the domain' happens to be its greatest weakness. The dominance of the domain concept in educational linguistics, generally, and language education and language in education, specifically, accounts for policies and practices that have 'always treated languages as separate and bounded entities in order to avoid contamination of one language by the other' (Makalela 2015a: 200), thereby contributing to monoglossic classroom practices in much of the multilingual South. These monoglossic practices are in direct opposition to what actually happens in the millions of classrooms spread across the multilingual South, if not elsewhere. This enduring weakness of this language-management tradition undermines its potential to extend the frontiers of educational linguistics in the multilingual South.

Weaknesses of the European/Asia-Pacific tradition are many and varied with—if not disputed and addressed as a matter of scholarly urgency—grave far-reaching consequences for educational linguistics, generally, and language education and language in education policy and practice, specifically, in much of the multilingual South, and largely hinge on the questions posed to this tradition by the African tradition as already outlined and this tradition's obsession with the notion of 'correction of deviations'. Were this tradition's 'corrective' principles to be applied to language education and language in education practice in the multilingual South, it would mean that the myriad mother tongues—which are often presented as a 'deviations' in monoglossic classrooms dominated by a few exoglossic languages of education and thus optimal candidates for 'corrective' interventions—have no place in foundational and later stages in language education and language in education in the multilingual South. These prescriptions from this tradition of language management are simply not brilliant educational ideas or principles, let alone sustainable ones. To cure the weaknesses of the Israeli/American and the European/Asia-Pacific traditions in language management, the African tradition, in typical Kuhnian spirit, has borrowed what is sensible and workable from these two traditions, while unapologetically using data from the multilingual settings of Africa to propose a somewhat radically different tradition in language management. The African tradition in language management prides itself as being a Grounded Theory because it is developed from data and insights derived from the coalface of language policy implementation in multilingual Africa. It is for this reason that this tradition holds the informed position that without recourse to African data—as a foolproof empirical base to invalidate claims it makes—critiques levelled towards it by the other two traditions will forever remain an advertisement of Eurocentric arrogance and a weak attempt at imposing Northern epistemologies on African data and scholarship.

At the core of the African tradition in language management is a humble recognition of the never-ending nature of the intellectual enterprise; an ontological commitment to revisit and if need be revise propositions should better and more compelling data surface or become unearthed. It is this orientation that makes the African tradition contain several generalisations at its nexus, fundamentally because of the understanding that *any* good theory *must* be built around generalisations. It is curious and telling that this *essential* character of the theory base of the African tradition is the European/Asia-Pacific tradition's key critique of the African tradition (cf. Orman 2013; Nekvapil & Sherman 2015). However, it would be a serious omission and fault to characterise the African tradition as only being a theory. The African tradition in language management is a paradigm in sociology and politics of language in the Kuhnian sense, and as elaborated on by Ritzer (1975: 157) to mean

> *a fundamental image of the subject matter within a science. It serves to define what should be studied, what questions should be asked, how they should be asked, and what rules should be followed in interpreting the answer obtained…[A] paradigm is the broadest unit of consensus within a science and serves to differentiate one scientific community (or sub-community) from another. It subsumes, defines and inter-relates the exemplars, theories, methods, and instruments that exist within it.*

The African tradition in language management satisfies these thresholds of a paradigm. It is for this reason that this tradition construes itself as comprising a complex of theoretical precepts and methods organised into a disciplinary enterprise that in turn informs practical endeavours—especially those endeavours aimed at optimal harnessing of language resources in multilingual settings. Thus, the African tradition defines language management as

> *[a] complex of theoretical precepts and the methods that they presuppose that are organised as a body of knowledge that preoccupies itself with particular sets of questions relating to deepening of theoretical adequacy of language policy and planning epistemology as applied to data and scenarios from multilingual settings, with an ultimate goal of harnessing language as a resource in society for the enlargement of peoples' choices. With regard to the latter, it is a way of doing language policy and planning activities especially in multilingual settings through a critical, optimal and creative development and deployment of linguistic, managerial and development-oriented approaches and strategies (*Mwaniki 2011b: 253–255).

The tradition's open-ended complex of theories includes decision-making theory, sociolinguistic theory, modernisation theory, systems theory, critical theory, management theory (especially as advanced by the public value management paradigm), phenomenology, human development theory (Mwaniki 2011a: 193), social psychology, social cultural theory (Mwaniki 2011b) and lately theories integrated into the language-planning theoretical matrix such as postmodernism (Pennycook 2006), game theory (Koffi 2012; Mwaniki 2013) and complexity theory (Hogan-Brun 2013; Bastardas-Boada 2013). Based on its complex of theories, this tradition specifies historical/historiographical/comparative method, psycho-sociolinguistic method, ethnographic method, decision sciences method, development sciences method and (critical) discourse analysis (Mwaniki 2012b: 8–29). As a disciplinary enterprise, this tradition aligns itself closely with the four salient criteria, in terms of which a distinct discipline can be identified as outlined by Kjolseth (1978: 804). These are: 1) a distinct manner of defining its particular subject matter; 2) a specialised language or set of constructs by means of which it defines and analyses its subject matter; 3) distinctive hypotheses and questions to which it addresses itself and which are not being asked by neighbouring disciplines; and 4) a particular and distinctive set of methods which are applied in seeking answers to these questions. As a practice, the African tradition in language management construes itself *a particular way* of doing language policy and planning activities in multilingual settings. This particular way entails a critical, optimal and creative development and deployment of linguistic-, managerial- and development-oriented approaches and strategies. It is in this perspective that translanguaging must be construed, i.e. from a language-management perspective, translanguaging is construed as one of the critical and creative linguistic and (learning and classroom) management strategies for harnessing learners' language resources to optimise both teacher and learner language choices in pursuit of epistemic access. To further illuminate this insight, the ensuing discussion presents illustrative snapshots of the intersections of translanguaging and language management in class/lecture-room contexts in multilingual contexts.

Illustrative snapshots of intersections of translanguaging and language management in class/lecture-room contexts in multilingual contexts (with specific reference to Africa)

The choice of the three snapshots presented in this section was deliberate. That the snapshots represent three different levels of education—these being basic education, high school education and university education—was the first consideration in their selection. This selection was in part meant to demonstrate that the challenges attendant on language education and language in education, as well as the creativity developed and deployed by both teachers and learners to address these challenges, cut across educational levels. Second, the selection of snapshots from two different countries, apart from imbuing the reported research with the benefits of cross-national comparative research as outlined by Hantrais (1999), ultimately serves to show that the challenges attendant on language education and language in education, as well as the creativity developed and deployed by both teachers and learners to address these challenges, are not country-specific, but that often they are (again) issues that are manifest across disparate education systems. Third, the snapshots were selected not only for their potential to provide insights into the complexities attendant on language education and language in education in class/lecture-room situations in two complexly multilingual African countries, but also because of their potential to provide specific theoretical insights on how teacher and learner linguistic repertoires can be harnessed as resources to optimise both teacher and learner choices in pursuit of epistemic access.

Mother-tongue learning in another tongue at a primary school in Mbeere country, Embu County, eastern Kenya

For purposes of this discussion, the primary school discussed shall be referred to as X. The primary school in Mbeere country of Embu County in eastern Kenya was established in 1969 in response to population increases in the lower part of the administrative location in which the school is situated, an area that was not hitherto densely populated. The researcher's association with the school is long and enduring. The researcher received primary schooling in the school and is lately involved in the school as a member of the Parents and Teachers Association (PTA). In the first role, the researcher was a beneficiary of an enduring Kenyan medium-of-instruction policy in which schools in linguistically homogenous neighbourhoods are required to use the indigenous language of the area from Standards 1 to 3 (cf. Bunyi 2005 for more details on this policy). In the latter role, the researcher's children are beneficiaries of the same medium-of-instruction policy the researcher was subject to four decades previously. In this role, the researcher has had the opportunity to observe how the children have handled the intricacies of this policy as implemented in X as explained below. Further, in this role the researcher has had numerous discussions with teachers in X on the substance of the referenced medium-of-instruction policy, as well as how it is implemented in real classroom situations.

However, the situation in X is not as straightforward as set out in the Kenyan medium-of-instruction policy. Since the establishment of the school in 1969, Kikuyu learning materials have been used in the school under the erroneous pretext that the language of the catchment area of the school, i.e. Kimbeere, 'has minor structural differences at the phonological and morphological levels' with Kikuyu, 'but these do not imply the existence of different languages' (Mwangi 2012: 20). The claim that 'at morpho-phonological, lexical-semantic, and discourse levels, Kimbeere is a distinct language with only marginal intelligibility with Kikuyu' (ibid.) was cross-checked and verified as true with teachers at X in the course of conducting research for this article. The fact that Kikuyu teaching and learning materials are still in use in the school was borne out by the materials that teachers provided when requested to provide the researcher with mother-tongue teaching and learning materials. They provided the researcher with Kago (1952; 1954; 1958) and Mûthoni (2007a; 2007b). However, inasmuch as the issue of the 'mother-tongue education quandary' (Mwaniki 2014: 1) in Kenya is a subject of a broader research endeavour beyond what the current article can legitimately tackle, it is important to document that the mother-tongue education crisis in Kenya extends beyond Mbeere country where erroneous characterisations of Kimbeere as a dialect of Kikuyu have been used over successive generations as Kimbeere's *raison d'être* suppressed in the education system. This quandary extends to another approximately 37 mother tongues in Kenya, because a look into the 2014 Kenyan Ministry of Education's *Approved list of school textbooks and other instructional materials for Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE), Primary Schools and Teacher Training Colleges* shows that only three mother tongues have books on this all-important list. These languages are Kikamba, Kikuyu and Dholuo (Ministry of Education 2014: 12). For Kikamba there is Keima (2003; 2004a; 2004b). For Kikuyu there is Mûthoni (2007a; 2007b), Muito and Karue (2003a; 2003b; 2004). For Dholuo there is Odhiambo (2003a; 2003b; 2004).

The question that begs answers after the foregoing characterisation of what is essentially mother-tongue learning in another tongue at X in Mbeere country of Embu County in eastern Kenya is how teachers and learners negotiate and militate the odds of teaching and learning mother tongue (Kimbeere) in another language (Kikuyu). The answer to this question lies in translanguaging. This insight is the more fascinating because the researcher vividly recalls the creative back and forth between the two languages from mother-tongue classes four decades ago—long before translanguaging came into academic and research vogue. The teachers back in the days of the researcher's primary schooling had the ingenuity to determine and acknowledge the full account of their and their learners' discursive resources; a processes which led them to intuitively acknowledge that 'languages are not hermetically, sealed units with distinguishable boundaries, nor are they capable of being forced into boxes' *(Makalela 2015a: 202).* In this way, they seem to have long discovered and utilised, for the benefit of their teaching and their learners' learning, the core premise of translanguaging that holds that 'languages overlap one another in a continuum of discursive resources that are naturally available to multilingual speakers' (Makalela 2015a: 202).

Attempting to teach English language and literature in English at a secondary school in Nandi County, Kenya

The secondary school discussed shall be referred to as Y. The school is in Nandi County in Kenya. Nandi County is in Kenya's North Rift. To the south-west it is bordered by Vihiga County, while to the south it is bordered by Kisumu County. To the south-east it is bordered by Kericho County, and by Uasin Gishu County to the north-east. On the west, the county is bordered by Kakamega County. Inasmuch as the dominant ethnolinguistic group in Nandi County are the Nandi of the larger Kalenjin ethnolinguistic constellation, the southern tea-growing fringes of the county where the school is located are relatively multi-ethnic because of sizeable populations of Kipsigis-speaking families (conterminous with the dominant Kipsigis ethnolinguistic group of Kericho County), Luhya-speaking families (conterminous with the dominant Luhya ethnolinguistic group of Vihiga and Kakamega Counties), and Dholuo-speaking families (conterminous with the dominant Dholuo ethnolinguistic group of Kisumu County) who work on tea estates owned by Eastern Farm Produce Kenya Limited—a company that is part of the multinational conglomerate Camellia plc., which operates in Kenya, Malawi and South Africa. This multi-ethnic character of the region is reflected in the school's student population. Like elsewhere in Kenya where members of many ethnolinguistic groups share the same public space, Kiswahili is the de facto lingua franca in the school. In the mid-1990s, the researcher had the rare honour and privilege of being posted to the school by Kenya's Teachers Service Commission (TSC) as the first-ever graduate English language and literature in English teacher.

The long-term challenge was to implement the approved syllabus for English language and literature in English across the entire school, i.e. from Form One through to Form Four. The immediate challenge, however, lay in actualising the syllabus in real classroom situations. Confronted by a student cohort with rudimentary competence in English, but relatively appreciable competence in Kiswahili, the researcher resorted to using Kiswahili—which the researcher has native competence in—to explain novel concepts in English language and literature in English in actual lessons. The researcher also encouraged the use of Kiswahili during group discussions as a way of enabling students to better explore the concepts that were being taught and learnt. Back then the researcher had no idea—professional or otherwise—about translanguaging. The only thing that the researcher had was the intuition of a teacher coupled with insights gained from educational psychology and teaching methods during training as a teacher. These latter insights informed the researcher that teaching and learning best proceed from 'the known' to 'the unknown', as well as from 'the simple' to 'the complex'. These insights are in tandem with the theoretical premise of Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom et al. 1956).

Lecture-room/tutorial interactions in a parallel-medium university in South Africa

The parallel-medium university under discussion shall be referred to as Z. For a system that has rabid defenders of the ilk of activists, trade unions and even non-governmental organisations (NGOs), it is a bit curious that not much scientific research literature exists on the parallel-medium instruction policy in South African universities, save for adulatory historical characterisations such as by Du Plessis (2006), and critiques of the social justice asymmetries that the policy perpetuates such as in Mwaniki (2012a). Away from the vested provincial interests that mark such characterisations and commitments to justice, however, there are understated and exciting possibilities that the official regime of two languages of instruction and learning in a parallel-medium university does offer. The interactions reported have been observed in undergraduate linguistics lectures and tutorials.

Students undertaking these lectures and tutorials are mainly registered for the general Bachelor of Arts (BA), and the Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Language Practice (Interpreting/Translation) degrees.

Many of these students have either previously undertaken courses in which some aspects of linguistics were taught or are concurrently undertaking courses in which some aspects of linguistics are being taught in the language departments. Very informative discussions take place during lectures and tutorials, especially when there is lack of clarity on certain aspects of the course material. It is not unusual in these situations for students to huddle in groups, often defined by L1, to discuss concepts at hand before reverting back to the lecture or tutorial plenary where they render their understanding of the concepts being discussed in English. The researcher encourages this mode of learning because over the years it has proven to be an effective method in clarifying linguistics concepts being taught/learnt.

Conclusions: Insights on translanguaging as a class/lecture-room language management strategy in multilingual contexts deriving from the snapshots

Several insights on translanguaging as a class/lecture-room language-management strategy in multilingual contexts can be derived from the autoethnographic snapshots presented in the preceding section. With regard to the snapshot on mother-tongue learning in another tongue at X in Mbeere country in Embu County in eastern Kenya, availability of teaching and learning materials exclusively in Kikuyu notwithstanding, mother-tongue learning and learning in the mother tongue in the first three years of schooling in X has for decades been a discursive and negotiation process in which teachers, whose training and exposure has equipped them with passable competence in Kikuyu, act as resource persons assisting learners to learn their mother tongue and in their mother tongue in another language by continuously and creatively ‘translating’ Kikuyu texts into Kimbeere. This practice endures at X to the present day. Inasmuch as this practice is far from ideal or appropriate in pedagogical terms, it underscores the ingenuity and resourcefulness of teachers in this school (and in schools where similar variables are at play in Kenya) when confronted with near insurmountable odds in actualising mother-tongue education in the first three years of schooling. Further, the fact that this practice endures to this day may signal the centrality of translanguaging in language education and language in education because, intuitively, teachers at the coalface of the challenges that characterise teaching and learning in complex multilingual contexts would only stick with an approach for several decades if it produced noticeable positive outcomes in their learners. It may be hard to come across a better example of harnessing teacher and learner linguistic repertoires as resources to optimise teacher and learner choices in the pursuit of epistemic access. This is language management (practice) as conceptualised by the African tradition in language management at its best.

An important insight deriving from the snapshot on attempting to teach English language and literature in English at Y in Nandi County in Kenya is that by allowing the use of Kiswahili in attempts to teach English language and literature in English—unorthodox as it was back then, but necessary because of the urgency and desperation of the moment—the researcher ‘collapsed’ the boundaries of the two languages, effectively allowing learners to use the repertoire of linguistic resources accumulated in Kiswahili to gradually develop a repertoire of linguistic resources in English, which in turn the students progressively used to access a corpus of concepts and ideas in literature in English. As already intimated, without any knowledge of translanguaging, the researcher hermetically unsealed the ‘boundaries’ of the two languages—English and Kiswahili—thus allowing students to use their fairly well-developed repertoire of Kiswahili linguistic resources to facilitate English language acquisition. With the benefit of hindsight, it can now be submitted that what was happening in those English language lessons in Y was classic translanguaging. By the time the researcher left Y to pursue graduate studies and a university career, performance in English language and literature in English in the school had improved drastically—thanks to what was then an unorthodox approach to teaching and learning. Again, this is an example of translanguaging as a language management strategy, where language management is construed to be obsessively preoccupied with (developing) and deploying optimal strategies that harness and optimise language resources in society with the ultimate aim of enlarging peoples’ choices, in this case enlarging learners’ choices in Y in the early 1990s.

With regard to lecture-room/tutorial interactions in Z in South Africa, it is important to document that this approach to university teaching, where students are allowed to huddle in groups often defined by L1 to discuss concepts before reverting back to the lecture or tutorial plenary, would be equally effective in the so-called monolingual universities if only lecturers were to realise the potential of other languages in facilitating epistemic access for students. It is, however, easier to implement within a parallel-medium environment because the official existence of a second language for teaching and learning provides latitude for creative use of other languages for teaching and learning in the name of and for the sake of equity and parity among students. This creative use of several languages for epistemic access in a university lecture or tutorial setting fits conceptualisations of translanguaging. This is also an instance of language management because translanguaging in these instances is used to optimise epistemic access through the creative use of the learner's linguistic repertoire. From the foregoing insights, it seems inevitable that language teacher education in the multilingual global South needs a critical relook, in its theory and practice.

In conclusion, it is important to revisit an observation made earlier that potentially points to the future of research at the intersections of these nascent preoccupations in linguistics, namely translanguaging and language management. This observation relates to the African tradition in language management, humble recognition of the never-ending nature of the intellectual enterprise and its ontological commitment to revisit and, if need be, revise propositions should better and more compelling data surface or become unearthed. Translanguaging research represents one such frontier in which more compelling data could surface or become unearthed. Were this to materialise, the African tradition in language management is committed to integrating theoretical insights emanating from such advances in translanguaging research into its open-ended complex of theories, thus moving this tradition's theoretical matrix closer to theoretical adequacy. But this is not all. The other part of this tradition's commitment is to repudiate Eurocentric arrogance in sociology and politics of language epistemology, generally. Specifically, however, this commitment entails a quest to liberate the American/Israeli and European/Asia-Pacific traditions in language management of the adulatory representation and interpretation of their epistemological achievements, especially with regard to the relevance of their postulations in making sense of data on language education and language in education derived from the complexly multilingual contexts of the global South. The research reported in this article is a step in that direction.

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