**Языкознание. Текст 1.**

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**THE PEDAGOGIC RELEVANCE**

**OF CODESWITCHING IN THE CLASSROOM:**

**INSIGHTS FROM EWE-ENGLISH CODESWITCHING IN GHANA**

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**ABSTRACT**

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

**1. Introduction**

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

**Языкознание. Текст 2.**

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

**Языкознание. Текст 3.**

**2. Codeswitching in the Classroom in Africa**

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

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

**Языкознание. Текст 4.**

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

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

**Языкознание. Текст 5.**

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

Likewise, Amekor (2009) studies the use of codeswitching in the classroom in selected schools in the Keta Municipal and Akatsi District in the Volta Region, Ghana. The research aimed, among other things, to explore the language use patterns in classroom settings where English is the expected code choice, and the motivations behind any code choice in those classrooms.