Instruction through Translanguaging in Triglossic Classroom Contexts of Midlands Province in Zimbabwe

RAPHAEL NHONGO
North-West University, South Africa
raphaelnhongo@gmail.com

LIQHWA P. SIZIBA
North-West University, South Africa

ABSTRACT

In the Midlands province of Zimbabwe, there are mainly three languages, Shona, Ndebele, and English that are used in schools although at home it is mainly Shona and Ndebele. Midlands lies right on the isogloss where Shona is predominant on one side and Ndebele on the other. The paper scrutinises how translanguaging as a method of teaching takes place in a situation where there are three languages at play but such languages are not at par. Shona and Ndebele are the learners' first languages where some learners are conversant with both and some with one of the two, and English is the main language of instruction. The paper also problematizes the idea of diglossia and that of a clearly defined isogloss in the Midlands province. Qualitative research approach guides all the methodological trajectories followed in this paper. Semi-structured interviews were the key data gathering tools from teachers in both peri-urban and the urban settings of the Midlands province capital, Gweru. The theory guiding this study is dynamic bilingualism. The results of the study revealed that in facilitating learning through translanguaging in a triglossic situation, teachers face challenges of balancing the languages and as a result code switching dominates the translanguaging process. It is therefore concluded that language inequalities in multilingual settings have negative impacts when it comes to translanguaging and negatively affects the learning process where other learners feel side lined on the grounds of their first language.

Keywords: first language; Midlands province; second language; translanguaging; triglossic contexts

INTRODUCTION

Although the learner's first language (L1) is vital for classroom instruction, the problem in the Midlands province is that the two dominant indigenous languages of Zimbabwe, Shona and Ndebele, are sharing the same linguistic landscape. Although Zimbabwe in its constitution recognises sixteen languages as official, Ndebele and Shona remain the dominant languages that are spoken by others in addition to their L1. While English is the second language (L2) to the majority of learners in Zimbabwe, their L1 is rarely used as language of instruction. African languages are taught as subjects and are used in other subjects for scaffolding where learners face cognitive challenges that come as a result of the use of English as a second language (ESL). The linguistic reality in the Midlands is that not all learners are conversant with both Shona and Ndebele as some can only converse in one of these two languages. Not all teachers are conversant with both Ndebele and Shona again and that makes it difficult for teachers to use the learners' L1 in the process of teaching where they find it necessary for them to simplify some concepts. The main argument of the paper revolves around the idea of translanguaging in a trilingual classroom where two of the three languages Shona and Ndebele are competing for linguistic space. The paper

problematizes the use of translanguaging as an instructional method in a triglossic situation where two of the languages are competing for space in that particular linguistic landscape.

Although Shona and Ndebele dominate all other indigenous languages in Zimbabwe, the two languages are not equal as Shona dominate Ndebele because of the largest population size of its speakers. Politically, Shona also dominates Ndebele and the trend transcends to all sections of the society. The dominance of Shona over Ndebele nationwide and in the Midlands in particular also result in the problem of balance in the use of these languages in classroom contexts. The differential use of English, Shona and Ndebele results in a triglossic situation in the Midlands and therefore it is prudent to investigate on how the learners' L1 are utilised in the process of translanguaging. The paper begins by reviewing the language situation in the Midlands province and then problematizing the issues of diglossia and triglossia on the isogloss. Methodological path and theoretical framework is followed by an analysis of translanguaging in a trilingual classroom context.

LOCATING TRIGLOSSIA IN ZIMBABWE

Because of the use of English as a language of record and main medium of instruction in institutions of learning, and the dominance of Shona and Ndebele in Zimbabwe, a triglossic language situation exists in areas where previously marginalised languages are predominantly spoken. Previously marginalised languages are those indigenous African languages of Zimbabwe, that include Sotho, Kalanga, Xhosa, Venda, Nambya, Tonga, Tshwawo, Tswana, Chewa, Chibarwe, Ndau and Shangani. These languages were not given recognition in education and other formal domains in the country. They are mainly found in Matabeleland and those found in Mashonaland are Chibarwe, Ndau and Shangani and their L1 speakers use Shona as their second language (L2). Sotho, Kalanga, Xhosa, Venda, Nambya, Tonga, Tshwawo, Chewa and Tswana are found in Matabeleland and their speakers use Ndebele as their L2. However, in these situations, the L2 dominates the speakers' L1. In the education sector and other formal settings, English is the formal language, and a language of record while Shona or Ndebele are the predominantly used languages. These previously marginalised languages are treated as regional languages. This differential use of these languages results in hierachisation and the triglossic situation. Abdulaziz-Mkilifi (1972) was the first to use the term triglossia to refer to the linguistic reality of Tanzania. However, Lee (2012, p. 92) says that the term triglossia was created by Lapside in 1975. However, Abdulaziz-Mkilifi had already used it earlier on in 1972. Abdulazizi-Mkilifi (1972, p. 198) states that:

> A typical triglossia situation would be found where there exists side by side (a) a regional or vernacular language whose basic role is oral intra-group communication; (b) a local standardized lingua franca which is used extensively in the educational system, mass media and in government administration but which is not developed enough to cover all settings of modern urban technological culture; and (c) a world language.

Abdulaziz-Mkilifi points out that such a model would fit well with the prevailing language situation in Tanzania in which three types of languages have been assigned different functions that they are in complementary distribution (Batibo, 1995, p. 73).
According to Johnson (1975, p. 93):

> Triglossia refers to a type of language situation characterized by a similar division of communicative functions among three language varieties, a vernacular and two superposed varieties, one of which is an indigenous lingua franca and the other an introduced world language. The three varieties are not necessarily even related.

On the other hand, Batibo (2005, p. 16) says that the language pattern in most African countries has generally been described as 'trifocal', involving three languages in a triglossic, that is, a three-tier structure. Ohly (2004, p. 113) is of the idea that triglossia may emerge from a sociolinguistic necessity, and gives the example of Namibia, in the Caprivi region where English functions as the official language, Silozi as the semi-official language and lingua franca, while Sifwe and Cisubiya serve as local or national languages, although in colloquial use. The languages in a triglossic situation are spoken in the same speech community each with a complimentary role. In a triglossic situation in Africa according to Batibo (2015, pp. 16-17), an ex-colonial language such as English, Portuguese or French would occupy the upper layer and used in international relations, diplomacy, government business and technical domains; at the middle level is usually a widely used language or lingua franca that serves as an inter-ethnic medium; at the lowest level of the structure is usually a language of limited communication and mainly used for family interaction and cultural communication. The dilemma that exists with the triglossic situation is that according to the constitution and the de facto language policy of Zimbabwe, Shona and Ndebele are at par but the linguistic reality of the Midlands puts Shona above the Ndebele language.

In Zimbabwe, Shona and Ndebele are not official lingua franca but they covertly assume that role. The covert position of Shona and Ndebele as lingua franca is unlike in Tanzania where the position of kiSwahili as a lingua franca is overt. In all areas where the previously marginalised languages exist, for instance Sotho, Kalanga, Xhosa, Venda, Nambya, Tonga, Tshwawo, Tswana and Chewa in Matabeleland, Ndebele is still dominating in schools and the kind of triglossia created is where English is the main language of instruction, followed by Ndebele and the regional language at the third position. The situation is the same where Chibarwe, Ndau and Shangani exist since English will be on top followed by Shona and at the bottom having any of these previously marginalised languages. What should be noted here is that the twelve previously marginalised languages mentioned here are only those that appear under Section 6 of Zimbabwe's current constitution although there are some others that still do not appear in the constitution like Buja, Hwesa, Nyubi and some others. The linguistic reality in many parts of Zimbabwe is characterised by triglossia. However, the kind of triglossia in the Midlands province is different from that of other regions in the country since the two competing indigenous languages are the dominant ones.

LINGUISTIC ECOLOGY AND THE PROBLEMS OF DIGLOSSIA ON THE ISOGLOSS IN THE MIDLANDS

Linguistic ecology as a term in linguistics was introduced by Einar Haugen in 1970 (Hornberger, 2007). Haugen (1972, p. 325) defines language ecology as the study of interactions between any given language and its environment. Haugen (1970, p. 334) emphasises the reciprocity between language and environment. Language is conditioned by the environment within which it is used. The languages that it co-exists with and the uses to which a language is put will determine its growth and its status. Hornberger (2007, p. 180) says that languages, like living species, evolve, grow, change, live and die in relation to other languages and also in relation to their environment. Language ecology calls for an inquiry into the interrelationship between languages that are

functioning in the same geographical location. In the Midlands there exist two indigenous African languages, Shona and Ndebele, and English which is a second language to the speakers of these two languages. The coexistence of Shona and Ndebele in the Midlands province does not entail having them sharing the same linguistic space in a mutual way but there are socio-historical forces that condition their relationship. The reality on the ground is that the Midlands province is not regarded as a place with mixed linguistic groups but it is treated and is believed to be part of Mashonaland provinces. The study is mainly focusing on Gweru town which is the Midlands capital and Lower Gwelo which is a peri-urban setting that is next to Gweru town. It is also important to mention that in the Midlands province, apart from Shona and Ndebele, there is Xhosa language which is found between Sogwala and Silobela. The Xhosa people are referred to as the Fengu in the Midlands and the word Fengu is understood to be an ethnic slur although there is a subgroup of the Xhosa people in South Africa who are called the Fengu. However, Xhosa is mutually intelligible with the Ndebele language.

The Midlands province can be on one hand be understood to be triglossic and on the other to be diglossic because of the interrelationship between languages in this area. The term diglossia was first used by Ferguson in 1959 to refer to the differential use of languages that are genetically related where Ferguson (1959) talked of the high (H) and low (L) varieties. The high variety being the standard variety which is used in formal domains such as the law courts and in education, while the low variety is non-standard and used in informal domains such as the home, socialising and conversation between people of a closer social distance. Rindler Schjerve and Vetter (2003, p. 45) understood Ferguson's notion of diglossia to be referring to "a stable complementary distribution of the standard language and its dialects: the standard variety is used for formal and written communication whereas the dialects are restricted to informal and oral functions". Fishman (1967) later extended the term diglossia to refer to the differential use of languages that are genetically unrelated. Fishman maintained the notion of high and low varieties where the high variety is used in formal domains and the low variety in informal domains. Fernandez (1993, p. xvi) points to Ferguson's notion of diglossia as the 'standard/dialect,' or 'high/low' model and that of Fishman as the social behaviour model. On the other hand, Sayahi (2014, p. 12) refers to Ferguson's notion of diglossia as classical diglossia and that of Fishman as extended diglossia. In the case of Fishman the two languages forming a diglossic situation are not mutually intelligible but are completely different languages which is the case of Shona and English, and Ndebele and English in the Midlands province. According to Rindler Schjerve and Vetter (2003, p. 45), diglossia is a socially differentiated compartmentalisation of languages. Fishman's notion of diglossia is the one that is most relevant in this discussion since the paper is focussing on the interrelationship and the functioning of genetically unrelated languages in the same linguistic environment. Sayahi (2014, p. 12) argues that in areas where extended diglossia exists there are also "some ethnic divisions between the native groups of each of the languages in use" whereas in areas where classical diglossia exists it is not necessarily so. If Shona and Ndebele are regarded as languages that form the extended diglossic situation in the Midlands, then it can be confirmed that these two languages are always fighting for space with Shona dominating the Ndebele language. Rindler Schjerve and Vetter (2003, p. 46) argue that "the concept of diglossia not only allows for the analytical assessment of bilingual alternation but also for the description of social asymmetries and power relations linked to this sociolinguistic complementarity". Fernandez (1993, p. xx) also says that diglossia cannot be divorced from politics since diglossia has "to do with language-related ideologies and the formal or conventional categorization of people along language lines".

Diglossia can also be described as a quasi-political dichotomy between dominant and dominated languages (Fernandez, 1993, p. xx). Rindler Schjerve and Vetter (2003, pp. 46-47) observe that:

> In situations where the state does not explicitly intervene in the inter-ethnic communication, it is commonplace that the language of the socially dominant group is automatically considered the official language. In this case it is used in all domains of communication, whereas the language of the subordinate group is reduced [in status] and thus becomes restricted to the informal and non-public communication.

In the Midlands province, power relations between speakers of Shona, Ndebele and English result in a dilemma whether we should regard the place as diglossic or triglossic. However, it should be noted that since English does not have a significant number of native speakers in the Midlands, it is not competing for linguistic space in the manner in which Ndebele and Shona does. The Ndebele L1 speakers find themselves having to speak Shona while Shona L1 speakers see themselves not compelled to learn to speak Ndebele. Thus, Rindler Schjerve and Vetter (2003, p. 47) note that in a diglossic situation "The burden of having to become bilingual is imposed on the subordinate group, which, in order to gain access to public communication, must learn the dominant language, while dominant speakers may use their language in all domains". The relationship of Shona and other African languages is similar to that of Thai in Thailand which Lee (2019, p. 69) says dominates other indigenous languages resulting in them having a diglossic relationship with Thai. Although Ndebele is one of the two dominant African languages in Zimbabwe, its L1 speakers in the triglossic context of the Midlands are forced to learn Shona, another dominant African language, as their second or third language because they also have to have English as a language of wider communication.

Shona and Ndebele are in contact in the Midlands province because the area separates Mashonaland and Matabeleland and when looking at the linguistic map, the area can be said to be lying right on the isogloss. An isogloss is a line drawn on a map that separates two languages (Branner, 1999; Maguire & McMahon, 2011). The major problem associated with the isogloss is that where two languages converge there is no abrupt, complete or total change over and no clear demarcation. This is because where two languages converge there are many linguistic and non-linguistic forces that come into play such as hybridity, code-mixing, code-switching, translanguaging, bilingualism, language contact, language change, linguicism, cultural conflict, cultural change, language attitudes, fighting for linguistic space and hegemonic tendencies among others. The Midlands province is also characterised by such factors when considering Shona and Ndebele. Although English is perceived as a neutral language in the Midlands, it is however, not used in the public sphere but is the main language of instruction in education.

DIGLOSSIA-TRIGLOSSIA DILEMMA IN THE MIDLANDS

On paper, the Midlands province particularly Gweru urban is diglossic but in reality, it is triglossic. It is considered to be diglossic because Ndebele and Shona are claimed to be at par yet in reality they are not since the Midlands is dominated by the Shona language. Hachipola (1998, p. xxi) observes that politics is misleading people into believing that the government regards Shona and Ndebele to be at par. Although Shona and Ndebele are believed to be at par, the reality in Zimbabwe is that Shona is exercising supremacy over Ndebele. Ndhlovu (2008, p. 305) argues that "The Ndebele language has always been systematically marginalised in education, in the media, the judicial system, in business and commerce as well as in general public life". The

province is claimed to be having a double diglossic environment because of having on one hand English as a high variety and Shona as a low variety, and English as a high variety and Ndebele as a low variety on the other. From this clear explicit premise, it can be argued that in the Midlands there are two separate formations of diglossia operating in the same linguistic environment. Such kind of a double diglossia in reality does not operate in a balanced and mutual manner since the low varieties will be fighting for dominance amongst themselves. Shona dominates Ndebele in the Midlands and therefore resulting in a triglossic environment. The Midlands province is in reality triglossic because English is the language that is used in formal domains and occupies a higher social status whereas Shona dominates Ndebele. It was gathered from this study that there are instances where some first language speakers of Ndebele find themselves unknowingly speaking to each other in Shona because of the assumption that everyone in the urban settings of the Midlands is a Shona L1 speaker. It was also established that the majority of Ndebele language speakers in the Midlands can speak Shona while the majority of Shona L1 speakers cannot speak Ndebele.

It was also observed that in schools in the Midlands, particularly Gweru, the learners whom their first language is Ndebele can speak Shona fluently but those whom their first language is Shona have difficulties in speaking Ndebele. Such a scenario is as a result of mere attitude towards each of the languages and a question of linguistic hegemony. When describing this kind of a scenario, Lee (2019) refers to it as the magnetic trend where certain circumstances force people to use other languages. In this case the Ndebele are attracted into using Shona because it is the language of the majority in the Midlands province and also a language of the political elite at national level. Ndhlovu (2008, p. 305) argues that "due to the quest for Shona political hegemony, the two national languages (Shona and Ndebele) are not afforded equal functional space". Such an imbalance in the use of Shona and Ndebele in the public sphere in Gweru urban has extended to the education sector resulting in triglossia being the reality. This goes against the language-in-education policies which exist as Education Act and as circulars. The Education Act of 1987 as revised in 2006 stipulates that:

1. Subject to the provisions of this section, the three main languages of Zimbabwe, namely, Shona, Ndebele and English, shall be taught in all primary schools from the first grade as follows:
2. Shona and English in all areas where the mother tongue of the majority of the residents is Shona; or
3. Ndebele and English in all areas where the mother tongue of the majority of the residents is Ndebele.

After the Education Act, there came circulars from the then Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture, now Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. These circulars included Secretary's Circulars Number 1 and 3 of 2002, and Director's Circular Number 26 of 2007. Just like the Education Act, these three circulars emphasised that Shona and Ndebele are equal and that they should be taught together with English where they are spoken by the majority residents. The implication is to have a diglossic kind of a policy in the country. Although in the Midlands, Shona and Ndebele are spoken by the majority, the reality indicates that Shona dominates the Ndebele language. Ndhlovu (2008, p. 314) observes that:

In the Midlands province, which happens to be a mixed community, Ndebele speaking students have been forced to contend with the reality of learning Shona because most schools do not offer Ndebele. Shona appears to have been declared the predominant language in the Midlands province yet there are numerous Ndebele speakers in areas like Gweru, Kwekwe, Lower Gweru, Silobela, Zhombe, Chiwundura, Gokwe, Mberengwa and Zvishavane.

Because English is the main language of instruction in education, and Shona dominates Ndebele, then a triglossic situation is created. The general public and even the language policy documents in education would lead one to believe that the Midlands province is diglossic yet reality shows that it is triglossic. The ideas raised so far are meant to show that issues of quest for language dominance in multilingual settings also have an impact in the teaching process where the learners L1 are also supposed to be used as resources in the classroom. The background given so far does not entail that this paper is dealing with the politics of language but it is meant to justify that the Midlands province is triglossic. It is therefore prudent to analyse translanguaging as an instructional method in such triglossic contexts.

METHODOLOGICAL PATH AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A qualitative approach was adopted because the discussion is narrative and descriptive. The study delves deeper to interrogate and explain how instruction took place in triglossic classrooms. Semi-structured interviews were used in gathering data from six teachers, three from two Gweru urban schools and another three from two peri-urban schools. Purposeful sampling was used to select the four schools because the researchers were targeting schools that were dominated by both Shona L1 and Ndebele L1 learners and teachers. Four 35-minute lesson observations were also done, two from two schools in Gweru urban and another two from two peri-urban schools where interviews were conducted. The lesson observations were done with different teachers and different classes because the assumption was that classes are not the same and teachers are also not the same and as such the approach was meant for purposes of validity and reliability of results. During lesson observations, the researchers were mainly concerned about language use particularly cases of code switching, code mixing and other translanguaging processes. The major interest was to establish how learners interacted with their teachers and amongst themselves in classrooms where three languages, English, Shona and Ndebele were operational. The ideas given by teachers during the interviews were also analysed to establish how classroom interaction was done in three languages where Shona is dominating Ndebele and where English is the main language of instruction but without restricting the use of Shona and Ndebele.

As way of adhering to research ethics, the researchers sought clearance to conduct research in schools from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education before approaching the school heads to seek permission to do research in their respective schools. The researchers did not directly involve themselves with the learners or interact with them in anyway. The researchers also did not coerce teachers to be allowed to carry out observations in their classrooms and the interviews were done on a voluntary basis upon the consent of teachers. The purpose of the study was also fully explained to the teachers who were research participants. The purpose of the presence of the researchers was explained to the learners by their teachers, and not by the researchers since the researchers were not supposed to directly interact with learners.

Dynamic bilingualism, a theory that informs the ideas that are advanced in this paper, "refers to the development of different language practices to varying degrees in order to interact with increasingly multilingual communities and bilinguals along all points of the bilingual continuum" (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2018, p. 57). Garcia (2009, p. 144) defines dynamic bilingualism as "language practices that are multiple and ever adjusting to the multilingual multimodal terrain of the communicative act". Chumak-Horbatsch (2012, p. 54) explains that Garcia proposed dynamic bilingualism in response to globalisation and changes in communication technology.

Garcia (2010, p. 196) explains that dynamic bilingualism is not about adding a second language but is about "developing complex language practices that encompass several social contexts". Dynamic bilingualism, here should not be confused with Sanchez's (1983, p. 44) concept of dynamic bilingualism who says that it is typical among people "on the move socially and geographically". Sanchez's idea of dynamic bilingualism is about a person who is moving from place to place assuming different L2s which is not the understanding of dynamic bilingualism in this paper. Garcia and Kleifgen (2018, p. 57) note that 'within a bilingual perspective, languages are not simply perceived as autonomous and separate systems that people "have", but rather as linguistic and multimodal features of a semiotic meaning-making repertoire from which people select and "do". Chumak-Horbatsch (2012, p. 53) is of the idea that dynamic bilingualism is "a theory that focuses on languages that speakers *use* rather than on separate languages they *have*". In other words, dynamic bilingualism focuses on natural language competence in a bilingual or multilingual setting without any conscious restriction to L2 mental lexicon of the speaker. This theory is utilised in the paper to deconstruct the idea that language is an isolated, autonomous, and self-contained system in education in a trilingual setting. Dynamic bilingualism is used here to show that a learner who uses more than one language in learning is better resourced that one who is dynamically restricted in the number of languages that he or she operates in (Garcia, 2009). The theory is also used to demonstrate that if a language that is viewed as 'inferior' is allowed to be part of translanguaging then the learner who uses such a language as an L1 has a better cognitive advantage than one who restricts him or herself to those 'superior' languages.

TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH TRANSLANGUAGING IN A TRILINGUAL CLASSROOM

Translanguaging is where learners are provided with the opportunity to shift across different languages in their preparation for writing a text in another language (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2011). Otheguy, Garcia and Reid (2015, p. 283) define translanguaging as "the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named and usually national and state languages". Translanguaging is a reality in the use of language in multilingual settings and this should not be downplayed in the teaching and learning in African educational contexts. Lubliner and Grisham (2017, p. 1) argue that "Translanguaging is reality-based; it is the way bilingual children and adults use a full repertoire of linguistic resources to communicate with one another". Garcia (2009, p. 43) argues that translanguaging is a communicative norm for all bilinguals throughout the world. Translanguaging as an approach to be used in teaching is important because according to Lee, Krishnamoorthy and Rong (2019, pp. 1-2), learners face difficulties to attain reasonable communicative competence in English language resulting in poor performance. It has been observed that "overemphasis on certain aspects of the language such as focusing on the grammatical structures" (Lee, Krishnamoorthy & Rong, 2019, p. 2) of the language result in shifting focus from what is being conveyed and focusing on perfection of the language. Translanguaging does not emphasise on competence in language but it is concerned about utilising all the languages at the disposal of the learner.

It has been shown earlier that the linguistic situation in the classroom contexts of the Midlands is trilingual because of the different positions that English, Shona and Ndebele occupy. The co-existence of Shona and Ndebele as dominant African languages in the Midlands province

does not entail that they are at par. Translanguaging has been understood to refer to "new language practices that make visible the complexity of language exchanges among people with different histories, and releases histories and understandings that have been buried within fixed language identities constrained by nation-states" (Garcia & Wei, 2014, p. 21). The question is how does translanguaging take place in a situation where learners have different second languages and where those languages occupy different statuses with one dominating the other? Researchers in the area of translanguaging have always been focusing on the dominance of English as a second language (L2) and as a sole or dominant language of instruction whereas this paper goes further to analyse translanguaging in a classroom setting where there are three languages with different statuses operating in the same linguistic arena. In this scenario, Shona and Ndebele are the dominant languages not because they are main languages of instruction but only because they are the widely spoken languages in the Midlands province. These languages are fighting for space although Ndebele is dominated by Shona as this is evidenced by the fact that the majority L1 speakers of Ndebele can converse in Shona but the majority L1 speakers of Shona cannot converse in Ndebele. The Shona L1 speakers find it important to learn English as their L2 instead of putting effort in learning Ndebele as an additional language. On the contrary the L1 speakers of Ndebele find it necessary for them to learn Shona as an additional language and English as their L2. The L1 speakers of Shona see no value in learning Ndebele and therefore developing negative attitudes towards it.

The Shonas and Ndebeles share an unpleasant history which has been characterised by hate from their first encounter in the pre-colonial times up to date. This has transcended down through generations resulting in negative attitudes towards Ndebele language by the Shona speakers and Shona language by the Ndebele speakers. Even learners in the classroom have developed such negative attitudes which they have copied from their parents. The Shona L1 speakers therefore find it difficult for them to learn Ndebele because of such negative attitudes. Korth (2005, p. 32) observes that language attitudes are formed through public discourse before actual language learning begins and such negative attitudes block the ability of learning a language that a child has an aversion of. Baker (1992, pp. 36-37) also says that attitudes towards a language do not emanate from a vacuum but contribute to such negative attitudes that lead to lack of competence in such a language. Mckenzi (2010, p. 26) is also of the idea that social factors determine the attitudes of the learner towards functioning in an additional language. There are a number of social factors that have contributed to negative attitudes towards Shona and Ndebele by speakers of Ndebele and Shona respectively and chief among those factors is power struggles. Such negative attitudes have even infiltrated into the use of these two languages in the classroom in areas where Shona and Ndebele co-exist, particularly in the Midlands. Translanguaging as an instructional method has become unique in this context where the dominant indigenous languages of the country are also seen to be water and oil in a classroom.

The teachers who were interviewed also raised the issue of attitudes by the learners towards one other's first language. The six teachers who were interviewed all concurred that learners in Gweru urban and in the peri-urban have negative attitudes towards either Ndebele or Shona depending on whether one is Shona or Ndebele. Two of the three teachers who were interviewed in Gweru urban mentioned that learners do not feel comfortable in the classroom when their L1 is ignored. One of the teachers said:

> *The learners have bad attitudes and some when asked questions they would respond using their first language*
> *than English not that they will be unable to speak English but because they want to tease those who speak*
> *another language or they just want to be funny.*

The other teacher who talked about learners' attitudes towards another indigenous language that is not their L1 said:

> *Learners feel more uncomfortable when one vernacular is used more than the other. Their facial expressions usually reveal that when one language is used more than the other.*

Another teacher again from the peri-urban setting said that "*When a classroom is mixed every student wants their first language to be used and when this does not happen, they would prefer English than vernacular*". Translanguaging as a teaching strategy becomes difficult to implement in situations where learners have negative attitudes towards other languages especially where the teacher fails to handle that problem of attitude by the learners or the teacher has negative attitude towards another language. It was revealed that speakers of Shona and Ndebele do not tolerate each other in the classroom as this was evidenced by the interjection remarks that these learners make when one is participating through his/her L1. It was said that the L1 speakers of Shona would interject by saying '*hatinzwi*' (We can't hear what you are saying) when an L1 speaker of Ndebele participates through his/her L1 while the Ndebele would say '*asizwa*' (We can't hear what you are saying) when the L1 speaker of Shona is making a contribution in his/her L1. It was noted that in boarding schools as compared to day schools, learners end up accepting one another regardless of different first languages because they will be staying together in dormitories. A teacher from a boarding school in the peri-urban said "*At this boarding school learners understand both languages because they socialise at dormitories*". These negative attitudes are deeply rooted in the history concerning power relations between the Shona and the Ndebele. What came to light however is that, although there exist negative attitudes towards each other's language between these two dominant linguistic groups, the Ndebele find themselves using Shona because it is the dominating language in Gweru urban.

The major thrust of this paper is to understand how teachers execute translanguaging as an instructional method in schools where Shona and Ndebele as dominant languages seem to be fighting for space. The teachers had mixed views on how they incorporate Shona and Ndebele in mixed language classrooms in the Midlands. The means of incorporation of the learners' first languages were seen to be mainly influenced by the teachers' attitudes towards the two languages and their proficiency in these languages rather than by any laid down common policy. The curriculum of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (2014, p. 34) of Zimbabwe stipulates that "The introduction of a second language and its alternate use with the indigenous language in the learning environment helps learners master concepts and achieve linguistic competency for learning and communicative purposes". This entails that, indigenous languages, which are learners' L1 should be part of the languages that are used in teaching and learning although they should not be used exclusively of English which is the main language of instruction. Three of the six teachers said that over and above English, they use a language that is understood by the majority of the learners. That is, if there are more Ndebele L1 speakers than Shona L1 speakers, then Ndebele will be the only African language used, and when there are more Shona L1 speakers, then Shona will be the only African language that is used together with English. One teacher responding to which learners' L1 was used in the classroom said that:

> *It depends on the classroom type; I use Shona and if there are more Ndebele speakers, I use Ndebele language. Sometimes I use Shona language I am Shona and I believe that Ndebele students understand Shona as they have shown it before.*

It is clear that the choice of an African language that teachers incorporate in the process of translanguaging is also influenced by the teachers' discretion and such discretion is mainly influenced by the teachers' attitudes towards these languages. The most favoured language by teachers in the Midlands province is Shona because of the assumption that the majority learners are Shona L1 speakers and that those who are L1 speakers of other languages also understand Shona. The above sentiments by the teacher who was interviewed also show that teachers in the Midlands believe that everyone can understand Shona. Ndhlovu (2008) argues that Shona and Ndebele, although being perceived as the dominant languages of Zimbabwe, are not afforded equal functional space. The assumption by teachers that all learners in the Midlands understand Shona are misleading prejudices and impact negatively on those L1 Ndebele learners who do not understand Shona. What should be borne in mind again is that it is not all Ndebele L1 speakers in the Midlands who grew up there as some only came to contact with Shona language in the Midlands when they were already grown up. Another teacher who was interviewed at a boarding school in the peri-urban setting said "*I speak both Shona and Ndebele languages so I use both languages. Although at times I am tempted to use Shona because the classroom has more Shona speakers*". The common practice in the Midlands is that those teachers who can speak both Shona and Ndebele are Ndebele L1 speakers. It is clear therefore that in the process of translanguaging, the Ndebele L1 speakers incorporate Shona and are even tempted to use Shona only because of the feeling that Shona is the most accepted language. The practice marginalises Ndebele L1 speakers and make them feel inferior when comparing themselves to the Shona L1 speakers.

During non-participant classroom observations, the researchers noticed that L1 Ndebele learners participated throughout the lesson as this was seen when the teachers incorporated Ndebele it was not the whole class that remained active but only those who spoke and understood Ndebele. When the teachers mixed the languages or used them concurrently participation was high than when they switched from language to language making emphasis by using Shona and Ndebele. This shows that proper translanguaging instead of code-switching is helpful in teaching as this made the learners with different languages to feel accommodated at all times. However, it was observed that Shona was used more frequently than Ndebele. It was also observed that those teachers who were Ndebele L1 speakers would switch between the three languages, English, Shona and Ndebele, and also translanguage through them, but those who were Shona L1 operated with only English and Shona although some would occasionally translanguage using the three languages. The Ndebele language that was used in the classroom had also incorporated some Shona lexical items in it and in some cases Shona language also influenced tone in the articulation of some Ndebele words. In interviewing the teachers after the non-participant observations what emerged was that all teachers believed that the majority of learners understood Shona although they expressed awareness that it was not the L1 for all the learners. A teacher whose L1 was Ndebele said that in explaining unfamiliar mathematics concepts, he would begin with English then explain concepts in both languages and back to English. He said "*In my mathematics classroom both languages are used alternating from one language to the other and then back to English*". As way of translanguaging in the mathematics classroom, this could be one of the best strategies where all learners would be benefiting from all the languages available. This entails that concepts are understood from different angles where languages are treated as valuable resources in such a multilingual classroom context. Such a strategy would help the learners in that explanations are done in three languages in a balanced manner where no learner feels to be segregated through language. Psychologically, the learners would engage positively because of the feeling that they are all being recognised in such an enabling learning environment.

Another interesting and more benefiting strategy from a teacher who was a Shona L1 speaker is where the teacher would begin by making explanations in English and then switch to Shona and then finally ask learners to explain their understanding in Ndebele. The teacher said "*Since I am Shona I begin by teaching in English, then I explain in Shona and at the end I ask the learners to explain in Ndebele*". A closer look at this approach entails that the learners who are Ndebele L1 benefit more because the approach exposes them to high level cognitive processes where they have to interpret in their L1 what has been availed to them in two of their additional languages. The processing of content given to them is availed in two languages where their language also comes in as a language of interpretation of the concepts and thereby putting the learners at an advantage. The only challenge with such an approach is that the teacher may not be aware when learners have misinterpreted the concept because the teacher does not understand their L1. When looking at these two scenarios discussed here, the approach adopted by the teachers here is that of code switching. Majchrzak (2018, p. 18) notes that "while the concept of code-switching considers two languages to be separate systems, translanguaging does not view the languages of bilinguals in this way". Code switching is not wholly translanguaging but it is part of it because translanguaging far exceeds code switching, and in its real sense, it calls for the use at the same time of more than one of the languages known to the speaker and those involved in the conversation with the aim of facilitating understanding. Translanguaging is concerned about how the language user draws upon different linguistic and cognitive resources in order to make sense and meaning from a speech act. Canagarajah (2011, p. 40) says translanguaging is "the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system". Translanguaging does not make clear cut boundaries between the learner's L1 and L2. According to Garcia and Wei (2014, p. 21), translanguaging does not refer to "two separate languages, nor to a synthesis of different language practices, nor to a hybrid mixture" but to "new language practices that that make visible the complexity of language exchanges among people with different histories" (Makoe, 2018, p. 17). According to Lewis et al., (2012, p. 659), code-switching practices the notion of separating languages whereas translanguaging focuses on learning both languages at the same time without separating. Majchrzak (2018, p. 18) argues that "Translanguaging is about learning through meaning as students access information in one language and they may have to process it and then put it forward in another language, which deepens their understanding of the text". This idea by Majchrzak points to the Ndebele L1 speakers in the Midlands who are taught by a Shona L1 speaker who receive instruction in English and then in Shona and have to process such information in Ndebele. These Ndebele L1 speakers are the learners who effectively translanguage and that puts them at a better advantage cognitively, because after processing the information they are able to memorise. Lewis et al., (2012, p. 659) argue that "code-switching has associations with language separation while translanguaging celebrates and approves flexibility in language use and the permeability of learning through two or more languages". If the idea of translanguaging goes by Lewis et al.'s (2012) argument, then learning in the triglossic situation of Midlands is to a larger extent not done through translanguaging because there is separation of Shona, Ndebele and English where these languages are used separately without having them scaffolding for one another at the same time.

CONCLUSION

Translanguaging wants to challenge the idea of boundaries between named languages and have bilinguals and multilinguals operating within these languages freely without any restrictions. What was observed to be taking place in the triglossic classroom contexts in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe is that although the languages known to the learner are utilised, they are however separated and the boundaries are in most instances clearly distinguished. The languages are used in a uniform like sequence where instruction begins in English to Shona and then Ndebele, and at times back to English. This sequence is the norm in the Zimbabwean society where even in general gatherings, English is used as the main language and then interpretation is done in Shona first and then in Ndebele. In national television and radio, news is read in Shona first and then in Ndebele last. This has created the dominance of Shona language even in learning contexts to the extent that translanguaging in triglossic contexts of the Midlands become difficult because of the treatment of Shona and English as autonomous and monolithic languages because of their dominance. However, the sequential use of the three languages, namely English, Shona and Ndebele, has benefited the Ndebele L1 speakers more than the Shona L1 speakers cognitively in the classroom in both grasping the concepts and in learning English and Shona as additional languages. Language attitudes by both learners and teachers also proved to be another factor that is negatively impacting on translanguaging in multilingual classrooms in the Midlands. Both L1 Shona teachers and learners were not willing to use Ndebele in the classroom yet the Ndebele L1 speakers were keen to use Shona and could converse in the Shona language. This kind of scenario put the Ndebele L1 learners in a better position because they were now exposed to the same concept in three languages at the same time while the Shona had concepts exposed to them in only two languages.

In a triglossic classroom those whose language occupies the third position are the ones who benefit most if the teacher is not biased towards the languages that occupy the first and second positions. When a teacher can balance all the languages in translanguaging by code-switching to all the three languages, the Ndebele learners who could also function in both English and Shona were at an advantage since the same concept was repeated to them thrice in the three languages that were used in the classroom. This entails that in a classroom where translanguaging is used as an instructional method it does not follow that the L1 speakers of the dominant language(s) would benefit most but rather that those who are L1 speakers of the 'inferior' language are the ones who benefit most when it comes to cognition. Those whose first language occupy the bottom most position in a triglossic classroom would be the most resourceful learners because they would be functioning in three languages, while those whose language occupies the middle position would be functioning in only two languages. The language that occupies the top most position which is the high variety in such circumstances would not be having native speakers but only used as the main language of instruction. The first languages of the learners will then be used through a process of translanguaging as way of aiding the learners' understanding because of their lack of proficiency in English which is the main language of instruction. This results in those using the low variety benefiting more that those using the middle variety. The fact that the Ndebele language in the Midlands province has already incorporated some Shona lexical items means that translanguaging is more pronounced with the L1 speakers of Ndebele than the L1 speakers of Shona.

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