

Language Practices of Transnational Migrants: The case of the Nigerian refugee students in Koza and Mozogo

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Abstract

The presence of Nigerian migrants in Cameroon has become increasingly visible over the last decade, particularly in the Far-North (Mayo-Tsanaga division) as a consequence of Boko haram insurgence. Those migrants come from various neighbourhood villages at the borders, from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The current paper seeks to explore how the Nigerian refugee students in Koza and Mozogo use language. It explores a particular language contact situation where both groups share their days closely together in schools and quarters. The study adopted Hymes (1974) speaking model to the analysis of the interactions between refugee students and the indigenous students to elucidate the ways in which meaning is negotiated and understood among multilingual speakers. It uses the Ethnography of Communication theory, proving the viability of Hymes proposition of the speaking model and illustrating how it is a useful guide to the analysis of communication dimensions. Semi-structured questionnaire administration to 100 participants is the primary source of data. Additionally, informal interactions between the researcher and the refugees are used to supplement the data from questionnaire and illustrate the language practice that emerge in those areas. Results show that French, English, Hausa, Fulfulde, Mafa and Mandara are the languages of communication of transnational migrant students. Hausa and Mafa are the dominant languages. The results also show that English is neglected from routine conversations since those zones are purely francophone, which brought about social bridging relationships.

Keywords: language practices, transnational migrants, linguistic ethnography, language contact, refugee.

1. Introduction

A transnational perspective on many different migration streams is increasingly relevant due to the forces of globalisation and their impacts on mobility across national borders. In the same vein, the accelerated growth of communication, transport, trade and information networks through globalisation has enforced the connections of migrants to two or more places. The ethnic and cultural mixture between the refugees and the host population has generated language contact circumstances. Language contact is a term used in sociolinguistics to refer to a situation of geographical continuity or close social proximity (and thus of mutual influence) between languages or dialects. The result of contact situations can be seen linguistically, in the growth of loan words, patterns of phonological and grammatical change, mixed forms of language and a general increase in bilingualism of various kinds.

In a restricted sense, languages are said to be 'in contact' if they are used alternately by the same persons, that is, bilingual persons (Crystal 2006, p.102). When two or more languages come into contact as in immigrant situation, linguistic and cultural features of one language affects the other. It is therefore clearly seen that the choice of a language in a multilingual context is a complex task and it depends upon different variables such as language user's social background, profession, educational background, attitudes and different social domains. Multilingual societies may inevitably face conflict over language choice during a contextual conversation.

Various researchers have studied the perspective of language use and language contact by adopting some methods, theories and terminologies like error analysis (Cathcart & Olsen, 1976; Corder, 1967; Hendrickson, 1978; Krashen & Pon, 1975; Schachter, 1974; White, 1977); language transfer (Jordens & Kellerman, 1978); languages in contact (Hickey, 2013; Matras, 2013; Thomason, 2001, 2007; Weinreich, 1974); contact linguistics (Goebel & Nelde, 1997; Myers-Scotton & Carol 2002; Winford, 2003); interlingual (Cohen & Robbins, 1976); Bilingualism (Ayafor, 2005; Bhatia, 1997; Fishman, 1967; Hoffman, 2008; Romaine, 1989); Language Shift (Gal, 1979; Tasah, 2023); Language choice (Heller, 1995; Li, 1994; Mugambi, 2003; Ngefac,

2011 & Rahman, 2008) and language practices (Matakon, 2019; Spolsky & Shohamy, 2000).

Language practices refer to the selection of different languages to be used within a community (Spolsky, 2004). In other words, it is everyday use of a specific language or language variety in a speech community. It follows logically with what Hymes (1967, 1974) called the ethnography of speaking, using it as an acronym with: (S) referring to setting/ scene, (P) stands for participants, (E) refers to ends, (A) denotes act sequence, (K) alludes to key, (I) means instrumentalities, (N) relates to norms and (G) concerns genre. According to Spolsky (2004) language practices is a sum of sounds, word and grammatical choices made by an individual speaker. This choice can be consciously and sometimes less consciously; it refers to "what people do". In language practice, the idea is that communication is more than just the exchange of information, but also involves the personalities and their identities. These specificities are believed to be vital in engaging the audience and moving the communication forward. Studies on language practices of migrants in Cameroon are sparse. Therefore, this research paper has as aim to investigate language practices of transnational migrants in Koza and Mozogo. It seeks to answer the following research questions:

- (1) What are the different languages practised by transnational migrants in Koza and Mozogo?
- (2) What are the factors that determine their linguistic choices?

2. The linguistic situation of Cameroon

Cameroon is home to a heterogeneous diversity of languages and various ethnic groups in its territory. Ngoh (1987) lists eight major ethnic groups which include: Bamileke, Tikar, Pahouins, Baya, Duala, Bali, Fulbe and Kirdis. There are two languages (French and English) which are widely spoken because of Cameroon's dual colonial history, with France serving as the country's first colonial ruler before being ruled by the United Kingdom from 1916 to 1960 (Ministry of Education, 2014). Lorenzo (2009) posits that most of Cameroon's population (83%) speaks French, while only 17% speaks English; eight of the country's ten regions are predominantly French-speaking. Cameroon possesses over 250 languages, of which 55 are

AfroAsiatic, 2 are Nilo-Saharan, 4 are Ubungian, 169 are Niger-Congo, and 26 are Bantu derivatives, despite the official status of English and French (Sokaleh, 2009).

Sutton (2013) and Akumbu & Carlo (2022) record the very rich linguistic background of Cameroon which counts about 280 languages. The three main families of languages in Cameroon are: Nilo-Saharan, Afro-Asiatic and Niger Congo (Chia, 1983; Lewis, 2009). It is worth noting that Niger Congo languages represent the largest number of languages in the country. The various languages are spoken by 20 million of people (Kouega, 2007). According to Kouega (ibid), languages in Cameroon can be grouped into five categories namely: official languages, major lingua francas, minor lingua francas, lesser minorities, and religious languages. There are two official languages namely: French and English which came from the joint of the French and British Cameroons. The lingua franca have been grouped into four families labeled: Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan, Niger-Kordofa, and Khoisan (Greenberg, 1996). Afro-Asiatic languages are spoken in the area stretching from the Northern Cameroon through Niger and Chad to Sudan. The Nilo-Saharan family includes Kanuri which is the language spoken in the far North region of Cameroon, where Fulfulde is dominant, Arab-Shuwa is equally spoken in the Far-North region of Cameroon and the South of Chad. Niger-Kordofan languages are spoken in the black African area, excluding South-Africa, where Khoisan languages dominate. From the four languages phyla, the first three are represented in Cameroon (Chia, 1983). It is worth noting that all the languages mentioned in this background resulted from their contact with other languages due to immigration and colonisation in the early centuries. This is the linguistic situation that the Nigeria refugees meet in Koza and Mozogo. They also come into these communities their own languages. It will be very interesting to examine the language practices of these refugees in this contact situation.

3. Theoretical framework

Hymes (1974) Speaking Model is adopted in this research paper. His framework is best known for his pioneering role in the ethnography of communication. He first proposed the term "ethnography of speaking," which later has been changed into

"ethnography of communication." He attempted to propose new approaches to understanding language in use. Linguistic ethnography is an umbrella term used to describe a growing body of research, which brings together linguistic methods for studying language and discourse data with ethnographic interpretation of cultural practices. The approach is used to study a range of disciplinary fields and professional contexts, including education, psychology, health, communication, and management (Snell, Copland & Shaw, 2015). Linguistic ethnography draws upon concepts and methods from multiple traditions in the study of discourse and interaction, including the ethnography of communication, interactional sociolinguistics, conversation analysis, micro-ethnography, social semiotics and new literacy studies. It has been significantly influenced by linguistic anthropology and shares many of the same theoretical underpinnings (Maybin, 2010).

Language study, for Hymes (1974) is concerned with analysing the ability to use language for communication in real situations (communicative competence) instead of limiting themselves to describing the potential ability of the ideal speaker/listener to produce grammatically correct sentences (linguistic competence). Speakers of a language in a specific community can communicate with one another in a way that is not only correct but also appropriate for the socio-cultural context. This demands a common understanding of the linguistic code as well as the socio-cultural rules, norms and values that govern the use and interpretation of speech and other forms of communication in a community (Marcellino & Johnstone, 2010, p.4).

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the viability of Hymes (1974) speaking model by analysing the data collected. It also emphasises on how different groups of people use speech in a variety of ways, each group has its own set of linguistic norms. It is necessary to rely on some clearly defined frameworks for ethnographic study of speech in order to analyse the language of specific groups and this is the case of this work. Hymes (1974) proposed three levels of analysis: *speech situation*, *speech event*, and *speech acts*. Certain aspects of any speech, according to Hymes are taken into account when analysing it, including the

setting of communication, its goals, and information about participants. The complexity and ambiguity of discourse and social interaction captured by these three principles, that is, the instability and emergence of meaning, its historical and cultural situation and the multiple purposes and dimensions of communication lead to a general methodological principle to let the data collected drive the analysis.

4. Literature review

Research on language practices in multilingual communities has been extensive. Studies on these fields mentioned below were conducted by other scholars in Cameroon as well as in different parts of the world. For instance, numerous studies have been done in the investigation of language contact, two or more languages come into contact and either co-exist side by side or the host language dominates the language of immigrants. Fishman (1989) referred to the immigrant language as "intrusive" and the "indigenous" as the host language. He presented three outcomes of language in contact, that is, when the indigenous language interacts with the intrusive, the intrusive language is lost; when an indigenous language interacts with an intrusive one, the indigenous is lost, or both languages are used side by side but in different domains.

Ferrer and Sankoff (2004) hold that the language preference of a speaker is influenced by dominant languages. Therefore most bilingual and multilingual speakers may choose a dominant language as a medium of communication because it provides them with greater advantage, economic benefits, social networks expansion and better opportunities. The choice of a dominant language can be triggered by the wider acceptance and functions of that language. More prestigious language is usually favored as the medium of communication in various domains because of its wider social functions. Pillai (2006) shares the same point of view when he argues that dominant languages can be used in formal and informal domains of communication and help to gain prestige, better economic access in the community, authority and power.

Likewise, Piller (2004) believes that in multilingual society, the language spoken by a large community can be considered superior than those spoken by the minority. The community

language is spoken by the majority and has a wider social function. Therefore, using the community language serves more benefits to the speakers and it can be influential on their language choice because it helps expand their social network. According to Holmes (2008), the use of dominant language expresses impersonal messages which create social distance between speakers. On the other hand, the choice of a less dominant language is useful to express personal messages because it helps the speakers to establish solidarity in interactions. Managan (2004) also argues that the choice of a dominant language provides people with the prestige and the chance to socialize more with other people, the thing that leads to a possibility of expanding the social network and gaining more economic success. Once a person becomes a member of a certain language group, this group becomes his or her social network and develops a sense of identity which can be revealed through language choice and manner of speaking.

Heller (1995) conducted a study on language choice, social institutions and symbolic dominations. The researcher explored the institutional exercise of symbolic domination through language choices which allow speakers to attempt to wield power or resist it. The study was conducted in two classes; the *Francias Avance*: a class designed for students who were expected to go to the university and *Francias General*: a class for students who were expected to enter the job market or vocational training after high school. The teacher in the first class used French while the teacher in the second class used French and English. The findings revealed that the differences between the two classes were evident. In *Francais Avance* class, students spoke French although most of them had English background and their peer group language was English. While in the second class, most students used openly French and English.

Yagmur and Akinci (1999) investigated the relationship between subjective ethnolinguistic vitality perceptions of Turkish immigrants and their language use, choice, and attitudes in the French context. The sample of this study was selected from the Turkish immigrant community who lived in Lyon and Grenoble. They were selected from different age groups. The respondents were 80 females and 95 males who were classified into older group, and younger group. Three types of questionnaires were

used as data collection instruments: the language use-choice questionnaire, the subjective ethnolinguistic vitality questionnaire, and self-rating scales. Results showed that younger respondents used considerably less Turkish than the older ones. French language use was much more common among the younger group but minimal among the parents. The results also expressed older respondents' preference of Turkish language under all circumstances, while younger respondents preferred French and dominantly chose it for a variety of topics. Only concerning religious matters, both young and older respondents chose Turkish. Concerning language attitudes towards Turkish, both groups of respondents reported that Turkish is important for the maintenance of identity, for cultural survival, and in the family. Yet it was considered to be less functional than French.

Sallo (2004) attempted to find out some extra-linguistic variables governing the choice and use of Arabic or Kurdish or a blend of both, such as topic, participants, situation, mood and purpose. The researcher used 100 informants who speak the Badinani dialect spoken in the North-West of Iraq and with ages ranged between 18 and 24 years old to collect the empirical data. Results indicated that language choice is a systematic (not random) phenomenon and governed by socio-economic, psycholinguistic as well as sociolinguistic factors. Results also showed that Kurdish was more favoured than Arabic when dealing with personal, intimate and casual matters as well as family matters and everyday routine activities. Arabic seemed to be limited to the educational, scientific, technical and religious domains. In the same vein, Degefa (2004) investigated the criteria for language choice in multilingual societies. The researcher examined the language choice in Ethiopia which was reflected in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia. The results revealed Oromo language containing the largest number of speakers of about 32.15%, then the Amharic language with 30.13%.

Othman (2006) addressed language choice among first and second generations of Arabic-English bilinguals in Manchester/Britain. The researcher used interviews and a questionnaire focusing on certain domains such as home, friendship, work, media, children and mosque and found that Arabic was used consistently at home, with friends, in news and

entertainment media, and also at mosques. English was used consistently at work, in formal situations in general, and in shops. Results also showed that Arabic was functional in their life. Moreover, Rahman (2008) explored the patterns of language choice, language proficiency, gender and ethnicity in the domain of office among University Putra Malaysia undergraduates. Data were collected through a questionnaire survey administered to a sample of 300 UPM undergraduates. Respondents were categorized as per gender (male and female) and ethnicity (Malay, Chinese, Indian and others). The findings showed that the non-Malays respondents were inclined to use English in the domain of office, where Bahasa Melaya held a constitutionally designated legitimate status as official language of Malaysia and that choice was influenced by language ethnicity of the respondents.

Chatzidaki and Xenikaki (2009) examined the patterns of Greek and ethnic language use among the secondary school students of Ierapetra: the Albanian students in particular. The study also examined language use in the 'family' and 'friends' domains, and the influence of interlocutor's generation on language choice. The study took the form of a questionnaire survey and was conducted in Crete. The sample comprised 79 students of immigrant origin in three secondary schools. 43 were boys and 36 were girls aged between 11 and 17 years. The results showed frequent use of the ethnic language with family members, but its use diminished along age lines; grandparents used it the most, parents used it to a fair extent, and children used it much less. Nofal (2011) studied language use among Indians of Yemen. Data were collected from 100 Indians of Yemen who were selected purposively. Eighty-six participants responded to a six-section questionnaire about their linguistic and cultural situation. The results showed that some of the Indians of Yemen still used their original language especially in speaking and listening skills. The results also proved that family and home contributed to this language usage.

Within Cameroon, Mefire (2023) examined language practice and sustainable development goals. It was found from the analysis that the current English Language practice in the francophone and bilingual media, local councils and ministries is inadequate, therefore, insignificant and unproductive. It was observed from the analysis that the ineffective practice and/or

marginalisation of English in Cameroon hampers national development in the sense that Cameroonians are being shaded from [inter]national development opportunities; worse still, they are deprived of scientific and technological knowledge and opportunities in English. In the same vein, Sosso (2020) explored the institutions and legal frameworks put in place to regulate and reproduce bilingualism, as well as to understand groups which practice bilingualism. The study found the nation's failure, as witnessed by the current situation of unrest, to successfully implement, mainly through translation, an official language bilingualism policy that grants equal status to English and French across the national territory. Moreover, Tuebue's (2023) study highlights the situation of the practice of mother tongue in Cameroon in order to provide the community with a relevant technique capable of facilitating its teaching-learning in the neediest areas and suggested that the most appropriate technique in urban areas to improve the practice of the mother tongue within families is based on the alphabet (APAA).

Tasah (2023) explored the linguistic phenomena of language shift as an outcome of the migration of some refugee children in Koza. It aimed at determining whether their mother tongue is being maintained or they are progressively shifting to the host community's languages. Data for the study were obtained through questionnaire administration. Results generally show that the respondents may gradually lose proficiency in their linguistic and socio-economic activities of the host community. Contrary to the maintaining or not of the mother tongue by the refugee children in the host community, the paper looks at how those refugees use both their own language and the languages that they met in Koza. The forgone literature review shows that research done on language practice in Cameroon are sparse. All the works seen here are mainly related to language contact, language shift or language choice. The focus of this paper is in the perspective of language practices among Nigerian refugee students in Koza and Mozogo.

5. Methodology

This study combines both qualitative and quantitative research approaches in an effort to obtain accurate outcomes and sufficient information from the respondents. The study used a

sample of Nigeria refugee students who are attending the Government Bilingual High School of Koza and Government High School of Mozogo for the primary source of data. The purposive sampling technique was used in the selection of participants. The corpus comprises copies of a questionnaire administered to 100 students who voluntarily accepted to fill in the questionnaire, that is, 70 informants from Government Bilingual High School of Koza and 30 informants from Government High School of Mozogo. All the questionnaires were returned because they were distributed only to those who were willing to fill them in. The semi-structured questionnaire was administered to the students in their various schools after a brief introductory talk in which the completion procedure was explained to the students. Completion of the questionnaire was administered under the supervision of the researcher.

Fourteen (14) items of an adapted questionnaire were developed for this study. The items measured the different contexts in which language is practised such as school, public spaces and homes. See the full text of the questionnaire in appendix I. Additionally, data were also got from observation and informal interactions between the researcher and the refugees to get feedback on aspects of their language practice. The observation checklist can be consulted in appendix 2. The responses of all items of the questionnaire administered to the respondents in the two selected schools were recorded manually using a summary sheet. Results were presented in tables, each table described a theme with a title, number and was followed with comments and description of the highest and lowest rates as some of the results were also presented in terms of frequencies.

For ethical considerations, the researcher acknowledged all the sources that were used to assist with understanding the study and to show the objectivity and reliability of the research study. Before filling in the questionnaire, the researcher explained to the informants the importance of the questionnaire once filled in. The researcher also reiterated that their identity will be hidden in the development of the paper. The data were also exclusively collected for the purpose of this study.

6. Data analysis

Facts gleaned from the data show instances of some major language practices of the refugee students in language contact situation in Koza and Mozogo. Table 1 shows the languages use in different contexts with their frequencies.

Table 1: distribution of language use

Language use	French	English	Hausa	Fulfulde	Mandara	Mafa	other	Total
Respondents								
With Friends	4 44.44 %	5 55.56 %	8 44.44 %	6 54.54%	4 25%	12 33.33%	1 100%	41
At home	1 11.11 %	-	7 38.88 %	3 27.27%	5 31.25%	11 30.55%	-	26
At school	03 33.33 %	04 44.44 %	1 5.55%	-	2 12.5%	6 16.66%	-	16
With neighbours	1 11.11 %	-	2 11.11 %	2 18.18%	5 31.25%	7 19.44%	-	17
Total	9	9	18	11	16	36	1	100

Table 1 summarises the items found in the questionnaire, which are related to the respondents' extent of language exposure. It consists of four different linguistic communication setting which are friends, home, school and neighbourhood. From the results shown in Table 1, these questions also deal with the respondents' language practice with different people. Statistics reported here indicate that Mafa language with 36(36%) takes the lead in practice among those transnational migrants as compared to other languages. It ensues from the questionnaire that the respondents' communication in Mafa is dominant because the majority of them come from the villages such as Kirawa, Zeleved, Ashigassia, Barawa, Pulka, Gwaza in which the indigenous people are mostly the Mafa. Even if parts of them are also Hausa, their duration in the host communities as they arrived since Boko

Haram started in 2009 in those areas, made them to acquire the language easily by immersion. It is also seen that 18% of the 100 respondents used Hausa, 16% used Mandara, 11% utilised Fulfulde and 9% used French and English respectively and one respondent used other language from those mentioned in the questionnaire with friends.

The detailed statistics from table 1 show also that among the 36 respondents who speak Mafa, 33.33% use it with friends, 30.55% with their parents, brothers and sisters at home, 19.44% with the neighbours and 16.66% at school. The respondents who use Hausa display a frequency of 44.44% with friends, 38.88% at home, 11.11% with neighbours and only 5.55% at school. Those who use Mandara indicate equal percentage of 31.25% both at home and with neighbours, 25% with their friends and 12.5% at school. The Fulfulde speakers present 54.54% with their friends while 27.27% at home and 18.18% with neighbours. French is used 44.44% with friends, 33.33% at school and 11.11% at home or with neighbours. It is apparent from this table that very few informants used English with friends, that is, 55.56% with friends and 44.44% at school. These findings imply that more is to be done in other to enhance the practice of English language and French in those areas because the mother tongues influence the official languages greatly. Each context of language practice of the Nigerian refugee students are presented and interpreted in turn below.

6.1. Language spoken most often

From the data obtained, the respondents gave divergent answers concerning the language that they speak most often in their daily communication in the host community. The general statistics summarised the languages used among those transnational migrants. Table 2 below explain the individual view of the informants, though they may speak two or more languages, one language appears to be his or her most preferred as compared to other languages.

Table 2: distribution of the languages spoken most often

Language spoken Other Most often	Ma	Hau	Ful	Eng	Man	Fr
Respondents - 100	43	26	10	9	7	5

The majority of the respondents, 43 of them argued as shown in table 2 that they speak Mafa most often in their various interactions. Hausa language follows with 26 practitioners. It is also seen that 10 respondents speak Fulfulde, 9 are used to English and 5 speak French. Following Hymes (1974) three levels of analysis: *speech situation*, *speech event* and *speech acts*, the redundant use of Mafa falls in speech situation where the host communities are mainly Mafa, which could be the first reason of the factors that determine the respondents' linguistic choice. According to the informants, their proficiency in the dominant language (mafa) helps them to integrate, have access to different openings and allows them to communicate effectively in their host community. It is also crystal clear that the respondents may use Hausa when they are with other refugee students as this language pertains to the place where they come from (their background), thus being a speech event. They also wish to negotiate their identity or sense of self within the context of migration. It also corroborates with Hymes (1974), seeing the ability of the native speakers to use language for communication in real situations (communicative competence). The migrants also speak Fulfulde which is a lingua franca in the northern regions of Cameroon. This could be for commerce, social interaction and having access to community resources. The respondents' use of French and English mostly with friends and at school is to facilitate their access to education, government services, media and to enhance their overall quality of life and well-being. The results reveal informants' responses to the factors that support their choice of each language. Comparatively, the speech act

relates any address of the informants to the audience whatever the language used.

6.2. Respondents' knowledge of languages spoken in Koza/Mozogo

The transnational refugee students' discovery of the languages spoken in Koza and Mozogo is worth of appraisal on whether they have a very good, good, average or poor knowledge of tem. The main languages in those areas are Mafa, Mandara and Fulfulde. Each of the respondent gave his or her own view of the knowledge of these languages. Table 3 below presents the statistics and grade.

Table 3: distribution of respondents' knowledge of languages spoken in Koza/Mozogo

Knowledge of language	Very good	Good	Average	Poor
Total				
Respondents	48	36	16	-
100				

Facts gleaned from table 3 show that most of the respondents (48), have a very good performance of the languages spoken both in Koza and Mozogo which are mainly Mafa, Fulfulde and Mandara. Others hold that they have a good knowledge (36), while few of them are average (16). Hymes (1974) posits that certain aspects of any speech event are taken into account when analysing it, including the *setting of communication, its goals, and information about participants*. Following this criteria, it is revealed from the questionnaire that the respondents are feeling comfortable with the setting communication and this is also thanks to their informative background as obtained from the data collected.

6.3. Respondents' adaptation into the linguistic and cultural Traditions of Koza and Mozogo

The data reveal also the divergent results on the respondents' adaptation into the linguistic and cultural Traditions of Koza and Mozogo. On the question asked whether they are already adapted or not to the linguistic and cultural traditions of the host communities, the majority of them said yes and few reported that they are unable to adapt.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents' adaptation into the linguistic and cultural Traditions of Koza and Mozogo

Respondents	Yes	No
Total		
Number	76	24
100		

Results reported in table 4 show that 76% of the respondents are able to adapt to the linguistic and cultural traditions of the host communities. However, 24% of them maintained that they could not. This still confirms Hymes (1974) who propounded *setting of communication, its goals, and information about participants* as certain aspects of any speech to be taken into account when analysing an utterance. The goals of the respondents in this case is to be housed somewhere when they were displaced from their original areas at the borders and arrived Cameroon due to Boko Haram insurgency. The background information of the informants also shows clearly that both the refugees and the host communities have a lot in common.

6.4. Some new lexical items adapted to the language that the respondents speak

This section concerns the respondents' discovery of the new expressions or word that they are not used to. It presents and explains some of these new lexical items adapted to the language that they speak now, which are drawn from the questionnaires and informal interactions. See the details in the following table 5.

Table 5: distribution of some new lexical items adapted to the language that the respondents speak

R e s p o n d e n t s	French	English	Hausa	Fulfulde	Mandara	Mafa
	New lexical items					
	- dévaster - à terre -oui			-munyal -tegoré -ousoko -mi sani ma -handé -mi don yama niri -war		-mbali ngaya- dzalava -tamaguiga -dam - salipas -ahnana - mbali - naha'a -agaga'a- avava'a-douldok- techè-ahalaki- atouts- ka glema- a tere- oui télé- walai

Table 5 displays some new lexical items adapted to the language that the respondents speak now. The lexical items are in French, Fulfulde and Mafa. They are presented and analysed below:

a) French

<u>Words</u>	<u>translation</u>
- dévaster	destroy
- à terre	down
- oui	yes

It is assumed from the samples above that the informants may originate from Nigeria, which shows their being purely Anglophones. They have discovered new lexical items in their contact with French as they pointed three samples in the questionnaire. In the analysis, these lexes are likely to become

some features of new Englishes in the informants' communication.

Fulfulde

Words

-munyal

-tegoré

-ousoko

-mi sani ma

-handé

-mi don yama niri

-war

translation

patience

T-shirt

thanks

I salute you

today

I am eating food

come

The examples above indicate that Fulfulde is also used by many people as some of the respondents listed these new spotted lexes in the questionnaire. It is being observed that some mixtures are found in the informants' conversations due to the multilingual context. Some tend to borrow the Fulfulde words such as *war* (come) and *ousoko* (thanks) when they are in front of the Fulfulde speaker. This kind of language practice may lead to a new variety of Englishes in the future.

b) Mafa

Words

-mbali ngaya

- a tere

- dzalava

- tamaguiga

-dam

- salipas

-ahnana

- mbali

-naha'a

-agaga'a

-avava'a

translation

hello

next year

courage

my neighbour

girl

sandals

here

hello

have this

it is mine

it is true

-douldok	canary for seeking for
water	
-techè	canary for keeping water
-ahalaki	previously
-atoutsa	last year
- ka glema	you lie
- oui télé	all the houses
- walai	I swear

All the above list of words constitute mafa language adapted by the respondents in their interactions. The speakers use them to make the addressees (who are surely mafa people) understand them as those addressees do not master English, but the speakers have a good knowledge of both mafa language and English. Sometimes the speaker intentionally uses words such as *walai* (I swear), knowing that this word is not an English word. It just flows spontaneously in his or her communication. This aligns with Hymes (1974) who stipulates that speakers of a language in a specific community can communicate with one another in a way that is not only correct but also appropriate for the socio-cultural context. It is worth noting that these vocabulary items prone the new communication capacity of the respondents as they tend to mix or switch codes.

7. Discussion of findings

The aim of this study was to investigate language practice of Transnational Migrants in Koza and Mozogo. The main results show that the informants use more than six languages. There was considerable preference of Mafa, 36(36%) and Hausa language, 18(18%) by the majority of the respondents. This shows a tangible correlation between the refugees and the host communities in terms of linguistic, and traditional background. It is therefore undoubtedly seen that these choices seem to have been facilitated by similarity. It is worth noting also that Mafa and Hausa have dominant scores because the informants are more exposed to them, which provides further evidence in the differences between those two languages and the others. This finding is in line with findings from studies where dominant language influences the language choice of a speaker (Piller, 2004; Yagmur & Akinci, 1999). It can be said that in multilingual societies, the language

spoken by a large community can be considered superior than those spoken by the minority.

On the contrary, the work by Degefa (2004) differs from this research as the researcher stressed that factors like number, economic and political position of the linguistic groups along with neutrality of the language contribute to the making of the language choice. A dissimilarity between this work and Holmes (2008) is also observed as the author claims that the use of dominant language expresses impersonal messages which create social distance between speakers. On the other hand, the choice of a less dominant language is useful to express personal messages because it helps the speakers to establish solidarity in interactions. Nonetheless, the results of this study confirm Matakon (2019) results which show that English is conspicuously absent from routine conversations, and people are even reluctant to respond to English promptly. It also confirms the allegation that English is still relegated to the background in Francophone areas, even in domains where it ought to share equal status with French.

Within language contact, choice making in the use of language is very important. An overview of sociolinguistics is essentially an investigation into how, why and where people demonstrate their communicative competence in language choice. This submission is proved in this research and it aligns with that of Ngugi (as cited in Otagburuagu, 2016, p. 10) who opines that “The choice of language and the use of which language is being put is central to a people’s definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment, indeed in relation to the entire universe.” So long as sociolinguistics is immersed in explaining who uses language, why, how and where, the sociolinguistic variables that inform language use are crucial.

8. Conclusion

This work has explored language practices by the Nigerian refugee students in Koza and Mozogo. It used Hymes (1974) Speaking Model to guide the analysis of the data collected. After the analysis, statistics gleaned from the data show that this research identified French, English, Hausa, Fulfulde, Mafa and Mandara as the languages of communication of transnational migrant students in the respective host communities. The

dominant language used for communication among the respondents is the Mafa language with 36(36%), followed by Hausa with 18 % of practice. The majority of the respondents of this study confirmed that home and friends play an important role in language practice.

It is worth noting that sociolinguistics captures the different dimensions that language takes when the different groups in society interact or communicate through language. Bello and Oni-Buraimoh (2017, p. 103) note that it is usual for communities to naturally stratify their use of language following certain sociolinguistic variables such as sex, age, religion and profession. This sociolinguistic practice further helps to confirm the unrealistic idea of a global language. To further the research in the same field, the researcher suggests an investigation on the multilingualism in language practice by incorporating Cameroonian citizens in the corpus.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire

Dear respondents,

I would like to express my gratitude to you in advance for taking the time to answer the following questions about language use /practice in Koza/Mozogo.

A. Respondent's Demographic Background

1. Age..... 2. Gender..... 3. Place of Birth.....

4. Educational Background..... 5. Native
Language.....

B. Interview Questions for the Community Profile:

1. Where did you originally come from?
.....

2. Where did your parents come from? Father.....
Mother.....

3. Why did you immigrate to Koza/Mozogo?
.....

4. How long have you been in Koza/Mozogo
.....

C. Extent of language exposure/performance

5. What language(s) do you use with your friends?
.....

6. What language(s) do you use in your family?
.....

7. What language(s) do you use in school?
.....

8. What language(s) do you use with neighbours?
.....

9. What is the language that you speak most often now?
.....

10. What is your knowledge of the languages spoken in
Koza/Mozogo?

a. Very good_____ B. Good_____ C. Average_____ D.
Poor_____

11. To what extent do you understand your host community in
their local language?

A. Very good _____ B. Good _____ C. _____ D. Poor

12. What are some new lexical items that you have adapted to the
language that you speak now?
.....

13. What are the difficulties that you face in speaking that
language?
.....

14. What are new to you when you compare it to your home
language?
.....

Appendix 2: Observation checklist

1. Issue of context of Language use
 - What are the refugees language practices with friends?
 - Which languages do the refugees use at home?
 - What are the refugees language practices at school?
 - What are the refugees language practices with neighbours?
2. Which languages do the informants speak most often?
3. Do they speak/understand the language(s) and culture of the people in Koza/Mozogo?
4. What are some new lexical items that have been acquired by the informants?
5. What are the factors influencing language choice in the different contexts?