



Language Choice Among Children of Couples of Different Languages: A Case Study of Techiman Municipality in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana

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Abstract: Ghana is a multilingual country with an average Ghanaian being exposed to at least more than one language. This linguistic situation often impacts language choices among bi/multi-lingual families where parents from different linguistic backgrounds face the reality of deciding which language(s) to expose their children to. This study investigates possible opportunities and challenges that the children of Ghanaian couples of different languages face in choosing the language(s) to speak with either parents or both parents at home using families in Techiman in the Bono East Region of Ghana as a case study. The study, therefore, sought to answer the key question, "What language(s) do children of couples of different languages speak at home with their parents?" Using the purposive sampling technique, the study collected data using questionnaires which were analysed using the bivariate data analysis procedure of Content Analysis (CA). The analyses of the data show that the children of couples of different languages spoke English and Twi/Bono as the major unmarked codes used at home. Some other languages such as Dagomba/Mampruli, Gonja, Sissala, and Hausa were also used at home by a minority of the respondents. The study further found that speaking multiple languages helped the children to make friends seamlessly and to participate in school, church, and mosque activities, and the languages play certain roles in those domains. The study also shows that the main domains where the children of Ghanaian couples of different languages choose a particular code or language are schools, churches, and markets. The outcome of the study contributes to studies on family language use and has implications for language maintenance.

Keywords: Family Language Policy, Ghanaian couples, Content analysis, Twi, English, Ghana

1. Introduction

Speaking more than one language on different occasions simultaneously must be seen and regarded as a great skill of the bilingual or multilingual speaker. People in urban Ghana speak one or two additional languages besides their mother tongues (Afrifa, Anderson and Ansah, 2019). For example, people in the capital Accra may speak Gã, the indigenous language of the Gãs, Akan (predominantly the Twi dialect) as a lingua franca, and other languages including English, Ewe, Hausa, etc. (cf. Yankson, 2018). Similarly, the people in Kumasi, the second major city of Ghana, speak the dominant language Asante Twi, plus one or two other languages such as English, Hausa, Ewe, Gã, etc. These other languages may be for purposes of trade and inter-ethnic communication.

Ghana is a multilingual country with an average Ghanaian being exposed to at least more than one language. This linguistic situation often impacts language choices among bi/multi-lingual families where parents from different linguistic backgrounds face the reality of deciding which language(s) to expose their children to. This study investigates possible opportunities and challenges that the children of Ghanaian couples of different languages face in choosing the language(s) to speak with either parents or both parents at home. This paper seeks to investigate the choice of language among children of couples of different languages to identify the language used for communication by such children. Using purposive sampling, families in Techiman in the Bono East Region of Ghana are used as a case study to explore the research objectives.



According to the Population and Housing Census (PHC) conducted in 2010, Techiman is in the centre part of Ghana and borders Wenchi Municipality in the Bono Region, Nkronza Municipality, Techiman North District both in the Bono East Region, and Offinso-North District in the Ashanti Region. The Municipality covers a total land surface area of 647.6 sq. km with a population of 243,335, a population density of 375.8 persons per square kilometre and an annual population change of 4.8%. Techiman lies at the confluence of major trunk roads: Wa – Techiman road, Tamale – Techiman road, Sunyani –Techiman road, Kumasi –Techiman road and Ejera-Nkoranza – Techiman road. Thus, this strategic location makes Techiman a bustling 24-hour commercial centre and hub for multilingualism. The dominant ethnic groups in the Municipality are the Akans/Bono, Gonjas, Dagombas, Sisalas and Mamprusis who migrated there due to trade.

Due to migration, job demands, education and other socio-economic reasons, some of the people in Techiman marry from different language backgrounds. It is, therefore, common to have couples not speaking each other's language, or even live in a household where everybody speaks a different language. However, it is interesting and gratifying to note that these couples who speak different languages choose one code or language (usually the dominant local language) in certain domains and occasions. This is the kind of language phenomenon urban Ghana is grappling with (cf. Afrifa, Anderson and Ansah, 2019). One of the challenges that the children of Ghanaian couples of different languages face is which language or code to choose when speaking with either parent or both parents. It is even more challenging when they meet in school where they must choose English as the unmarked language for formal classroom interactions and still choose a locally predominant language to interact with friends either in school or outside school. Balancing all these choices and selecting a particular language on any occasion puts the bi/multi-lingual child ahead of the monolingual child. The bi/multi-lingual child is not only ahead of the monolingual child in terms of language acquisition but also uses their skills and proficiency in the languages to their advantage and in achieving communicative goals within their social networks. The bilingual child may use a particular language to assert some right or even to identify with the listener (Wardhaugh, 1992).

The first step in understanding what choices are available to (bi/multi-lingual) speakers is to gain some idea of what languages and varieties are available to them in a particular social context (Romaine, 1994). This implies that bi/multi-lingual speakers choose a particular language in different social contexts, and the first consideration, of course, is which language will be comprehensible to the person being addressed (Hudson, 2001).

The issue being explored is that the children of Ghanaian couples of different languages in Techiman in the Brong Ahafo Region face some difficulties and opportunities in choosing the language they speak with either parent or both parents at home. They do not only experience this dualism (thus difficulties and opportunities that come with bilingualism and multilingualism) at home but also in school where they have to choose a particular language in different domains. These bi/multi-lingual children have to contend with speaking English in class, Twi or a switch between Twi and English on the school compound with friends, Twi only on the streets, and at home the different languages of their parents if the parents do not speak Twi as a default language.

Therefore, the aims and objectives of this study are as follows: (a) to investigate the language used for communication by children with parents who do not speak the same language; (b) to ascertain the possible factors that account for bi/multi-lingual children choosing more than one language; (c) to explore the benefit derived from choosing more than one language; and (d) to identify the possible domain areas of language choice among these children.

2. Review of Literature

Language choice is the act of choosing to speak one language over another in each situation. In sociolinguistic contexts, language choice can be bilingual or multilingual, which refers to knowing and using two or more different languages and codes (Garcia and Wei, 2014). Garcia and Wei (2014) also refer to bilingualism as multilingualism because the term is often used to mean knowing and using more than two languages. Garcia and Wei are supported by Wardhaugh (1992:89) who says that bilingualism and multilingualism "present us with fairly clear cases." What all this means is that the terms language choice, bilingualism, and multilingualism, are all used to mean speaking more than one language at a time in each situation. Thus, bilingualism is applied in this paper to mean language choice where the speaker chooses to speak a particular language at a given time be it bilingual or



multilingual. [Ansah \(2014\)](#) states that in a multilingual setting, the multilingual speaker is required to make or select the right language choice, which primarily depends on the domain of usage and the linguistic repertoire of speech participants.

Monolingualism, a situation of speaking only one language, can be the norm in some contexts where the people are monolingual in one language or the other. In such places, bilingualism is frowned upon, and bilingual individuals are regarded as not belonging to their monolingual communities ([Wardhaugh, 1992](#); [Rajend, et al., 2000](#)). However, some authorial opinions favour bilingualism. Pushing a strong case for bilingualism, [Grosjean \(1989\)](#), for instance, argues that the bilingual is not two monolinguals in one person but individuals with their abilities and skills in using each of those languages revealing their preferences and needs in the multidimensional social contexts in which they interact with others. [Grosjean](#) further states that bilinguals hardly use their languages equally and frequently in every domain, hence bilinguals use each language for different purposes, in different contexts, and in communicating with different interlocutors ([Grosjean, 1989; 2013](#)). This view by [Grosjean \(1989\)](#) is shared by [Wardhaugh \(1992:98\)](#) who says:

a monolingual individual would be regarded as a misfit, lacking an important skill in society, the skill of being able to interact freely with the speakers of other languages with whom regular contact is made in the ordinary business of living.

In terms of language proficiency, bilingual speakers are said to perform better in language and handle language more proficiently than monolingual speakers (cf. [Ameka, Ahadzi & Essegbey, 2015](#)). [Garcia and Wei \(2014\)](#) state that the proficiency of bilinguals in two languages is not stored separately in the brain and that each proficiency does not behave independently of the other. This means that the bilingual speaker's proficiency in one language is equally the same as the other, and that proficiency in one language depends on the proficiency of the other. This interdependence of the bilingual's languages again, according to [Garcia and Wei](#) is supported by more recent neurolinguistics studies of bilinguals which have confirmed that even when one language is being accessed and used, the other language remains active and can be accessed easily (e.g., [Grosjean, 2013](#)).

The preference for the choice of a particular language over another may be prompted by factors like social status, educational attainment, ethnicity, age, occupation, gender, topic, and place, among others ([David, 2006](#)). The preference of the bilingual and multilingual speaker for a particular language/code may be influenced by dominant languages and the selection of a dominant language can be triggered by wider acceptance and functions of that language ([Ferrer & Sankoff, 2004](#)). That is, some bilingual and multilingual may select a dominant language as a medium of communication because it gives them some advantages such as economic benefits, social network expansion and better opportunities. Equally, a language with more prestige is usually favoured as the medium of communication in various domains because of its broader social functions.

Studies on language choice have gained scholarly attention. For instance, [Heller \(1995\)](#) investigated the "institutional exercise of symbolic domination through language choices", which allowed users to try to exercise power or resist it. [Heller's](#) study was carried out in two classrooms: the *Françias Avance*, which was for students who were to enter the university after high school, and *Françias General*, which was designed for high school students who were to enter the job market or vocational training after completion. The *Françias Avance* class teacher used the French language while the one in the *Françias General* class used both French and English languages. The study revealed that although a good number of the students in the *Françias Avance* class had an English background, they spoke French while the students in the *Françias General* class spoke both French and English.

Studies on the bilingual speaker's decision to choose any language within the context of Africa have gained scholarly attention. The studies revealed that in Africa, the most common pattern of bilingualism is to use the speaker's mother tongue plus an indigenous lingua franca, or an alien official language (such as English or French) ([Myers-Scotton, 1993](#); [Rajend, et al., 2000](#)).

In Nigeria, studies on "Changing trends in language choice in Nigeria" disclose that while some changing trends in language indicate an expanding use of the indigenous languages (as with the cases of the legislature, political campaign, print media, etc.), trends in language of the youth and language use in electronic media point to



a growing dominance of English (Igboanusi, 2008). This study lends support to the fact that bilingualism is on the increase all over the world including in Nigeria.

In Ghana, Ansah (2014) examines factors that guided multilingual speakers in choosing to speak particular languages in Larteh, a multilingual setting. Education, tradition, and religion were the three (3) domain areas examined. However, the study revealed that factors that determined language choice were gradually undergoing some changes. Furthermore, studies from the country reveal that students' lack of competence in English and the linguistic gap in the indigenous languages are the pragmatic factors that influence language choice in Ghanaian classrooms (Agbozo, 2015; Yevudey & Agbozo, 2019; Yevudey, 2013). On the academic performance of the bilingual speaker, studies conducted indicate that students who combine English and native Ghanaian languages at home perform better than those who use only English or Ghanaian languages (Ameka, Ahadzi & Essegbey, 2015).

In terms of language use at home, there is an observable change in code choices by families, especially within urban centres in Ghana. As evident by the research by Afrifa, Anderson and Ansah (2019), there is a predominant use of English as the medium of communication at home in urban centres like Accra as a consequence of economic status, age, inter-ethnic marriages, and educational background, and in addition to other factors such as the media, language of education policies and the use of the internet. This development in family language use where English is the major language of the home is contrary to previous observations where indigenous languages are the expected code choice at home and English is a preserve mainly for formal and official purposes. This shows the expanding context of the use of English as a medium of communication in Ghana.

It can, therefore, be inferred from the literature that language use in multilingual contexts is fluid, dynamic and informed by various factors. Hence, a similar situation can be observed for family language use at home, especially among couples from different linguistic backgrounds, which is the focus of this study.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The study is conducted within the framework of the Markedness Model formulated by Myers-Scotton (1993; 1998). Myers-Scotton (1998) explains that the Markedness Model is about the selection or choice of one linguistic (language) variety over other possible varieties. Myers-Scotton (1993) further states that each language in a multilingual setting is allied to particular social roles, which she refers to as "rights-and-obligations (RO) sets". The speaker-hearer signals their understanding of the current situation by choosing to speak a particular language. The choice of a particular language is also an indication of the speaker-hearer's relevant role within the context.

The Model is stated in the form of a principle – the negotiation principle, and three maxims. The negotiation principle presents the central idea of the theory. Thus, this led to Myers-Scotton's assertion: "[c]hoose the form of your conversational contribution such that it indexes the set of rights and obligations which you wish to be in force between the speaker and addressee for the current exchange" (1993, p. 113).

The three maxims emerge from this principle – the unmarked choice maxim; the marked choice maxim; and the exploratory choice maxim. The unmarked choice maxim states, "[m]ake your code choice the unmarked index of the unmarked RO set in talk exchanges when you wish to establish or affirm that RO set" (Myers-Scotton, 1993: 114). The marked choice maxim directs, "[m]ake a marked code choice...when you wish to establish a new RO set as unmarked for the current exchange" (Myers-Scotton, 1993: 131). Finally, the exploratory choice maxim states, "[w]hen an unmarked choice is not clear, use codeswitching (CS) to make alternate exploratory choices as candidates for an unmarked choice and thereby as an index of a RO set which you favor" (Myers-Scotton, 1993: 142). In this sense, social meanings of language choice and the causes of alternation are established completely in terms of participant rights and obligations.

The Markedness Model applies the marked versus unmarked distinction to explain the social and psychological motivations for making one language choice over another. What community norms would predict is unmarked; what the community norms would not predict is marked (Myers-Scotton, 1998). Kieswetter (1997) adds to the explanation of the Markedness Model by stating that the unmarked choice is considered the expected choice within that particular context, whereas making a marked choice often carries extra social meaning.



The Markedness Model of Myers-Scotton (1993; 1998) is appropriate for the present paper since it relates to the choice of one language over another in a speech situation. In social settings (domains) where the children of Ghanaian couples of different linguistic backgrounds are expected to speak, they choose certain languages as unmarked, and others as marked. For instance, in the Techiman Municipality and school, the children speak English as the unmarked and any other language as the marked. While at home, they may speak either their parents' language as unmarked and Twi or English as marked. On the street or in the market, they may speak Twi as the unmarked and any other language as marked.

3. Methodology

Techiman Municipality has been selected for this study because, like Kumasi, Accra, or any other cosmopolitan or municipal settlement, Techiman has a heterogeneous population with several businesses, both private and public and has a good number of married couples who do not speak one another's languages. A total population of sixty (60) participants were selected through purposive sampling to answer the questionnaire. Of these sixty (60) participants, thirty (30) were children of parents who both had formal education and the other thirty (30) were children of parents who had at least one parent with formal education. Purposive sampling is used in this study because it allows for the selection of a sample based on several criteria such as the researcher's knowledge of the population, the aim of the study, and the preparedness of the participants to provide information.

This present study looks at the language choice among children of Ghanaian parents who do not speak each other's language and as a result, the researcher has to use a purposive sampling technique to identify such children in schools and at homes for them to answer the questionnaire.

A set of questionnaires consisting of both closed-ended and open-ended questions was designed and given to participants to respond to, by way of sharing their views on the subject matter. The closed-ended questions allowed the participants to select by ticking some responses they agreed to. The open-ended questions, on the other hand, allowed participants to express their views on the issues in their choice of language.

The questionnaires explored the language used by couples of different languages and their children to communicate among themselves and other people and further looked into the domain areas of language choice and the benefits of speaking more than one language.

The study analysed the data using the bivariate data analysis procedure of Content Analysis (CA). This procedure was used because it places the collected data into a tabular form so that the real meaning of the data can be derived (Mustafa, 2010). The bivariate data analysis is a simple table with columns for the identity of variables, the frequency of the occurrence of each of the variables, and the percentage of the frequency of occurrence.

The research participation was voluntary, and all participants were anonymised with no information about the participants revealed as part of the data analyses and interpretation. The data collected are also kept on a password-protected computer for the research.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

This section presents data from the responses to the questions and provides interpretations based on the results. The results are presented in tables and figures representing the frequencies and their corresponding percentages, and the open-ended questions are also presented in tables.

4.1. Sex of Respondents

Table 1. Sex Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Number	Percentage (%)
Female	34	56.7
Male	26	43.3
Total	60	100



Table 1 shows that all sixty (60) children of parents of different languages responded to the questionnaire. Of this number, thirty-four (34) representing 56.7% were female while twenty-six (26) representing 43.3% were male. The difference in the number of female and male respondents did not have any effect on the language choice of the participants. This is to say that the sex of the participants did not influence their choice of any particular language.

4.2 Educational Background of the Parents of the Respondents

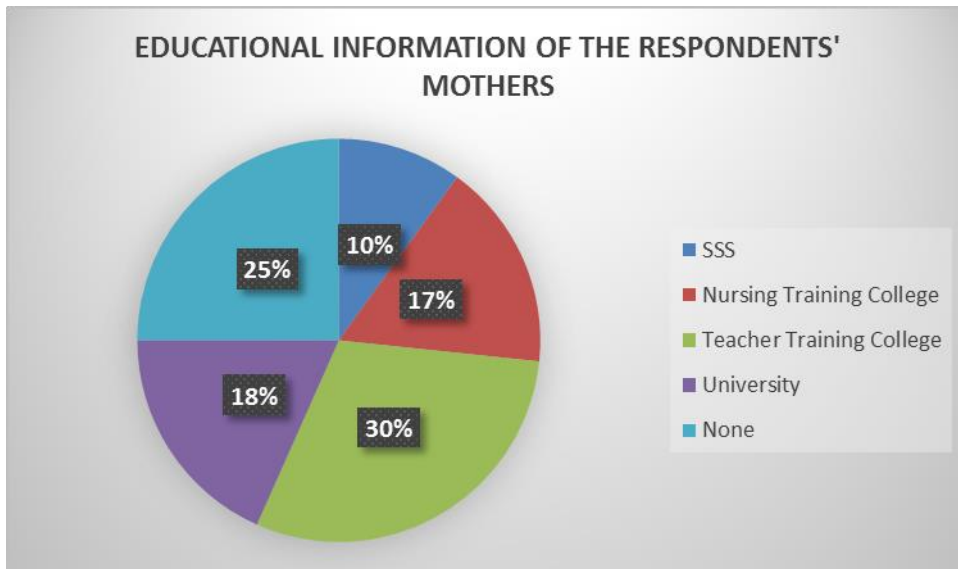


Figure 1 (a). Educational Information of mothers of the respondents

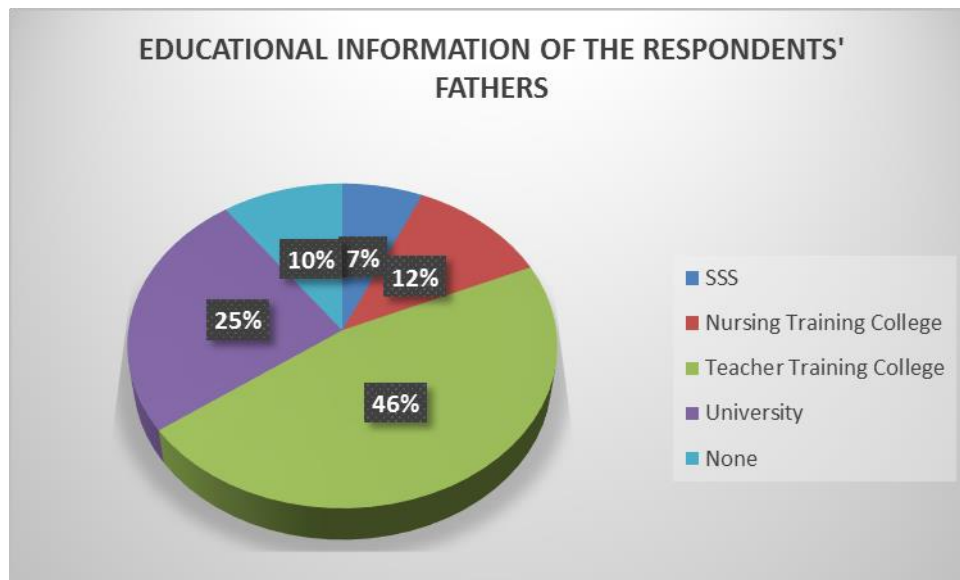


Figure 1 (b). Educational Information of fathers of the respondents

Figure 1 (a) shows the responses of the sixty (60) children who answered the questionnaire. Six (6) of them said their mothers' highest academic qualification was a senior secondary school (SSS) and this represents 10%. Ten (10) children indicated that their mothers' highest education was nursing training college which represents 17% while eighteen (18) of them representing 30% said their mothers' highest academic qualification was teacher training college. Eleven (11) of them representing 18% indicated that their mothers' highest qualification was university education while fifteen (15) representing 25% indicated that their mothers never had any academic qualification.

Figure 1 (b) indicates that of the sixty (60) respondents, four (4) of them representing 7% said their fathers' highest formal education was SSS while seven (7) respondents representing 12% indicated their fathers' highest formal education was nursing training college. Twenty-eight (28) of the respondents representing 46% said their fathers' highest formal education was teacher training college while six (6) respondents representing 10% said their fathers never had any formal education.

From Figures 1 (a) and (b), it can be explained that most of the parents of the respondents have some level of formal education ranging from SSS to university. This accounts for why children of parents of different languages choose English as one of the neutral languages at home. It thus confirms the view of Hudson (2001) that bilingual speakers choose a particular language in different social contexts, and the first consideration, of course, is which language will be comprehensible to the person being addressed.

4.2 Language(s) used in Domain Areas

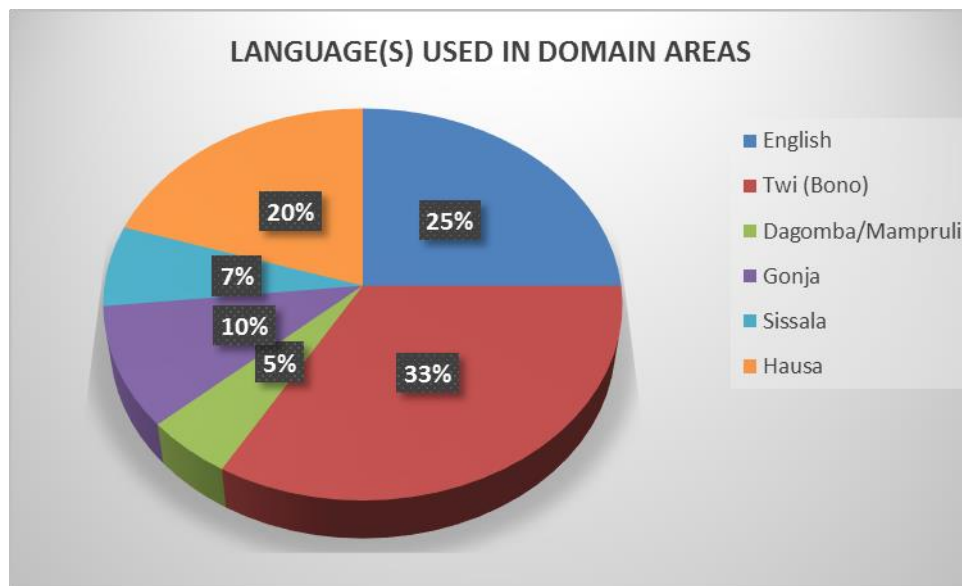


Figure 2 (a). Language(s) Children Speak at Home

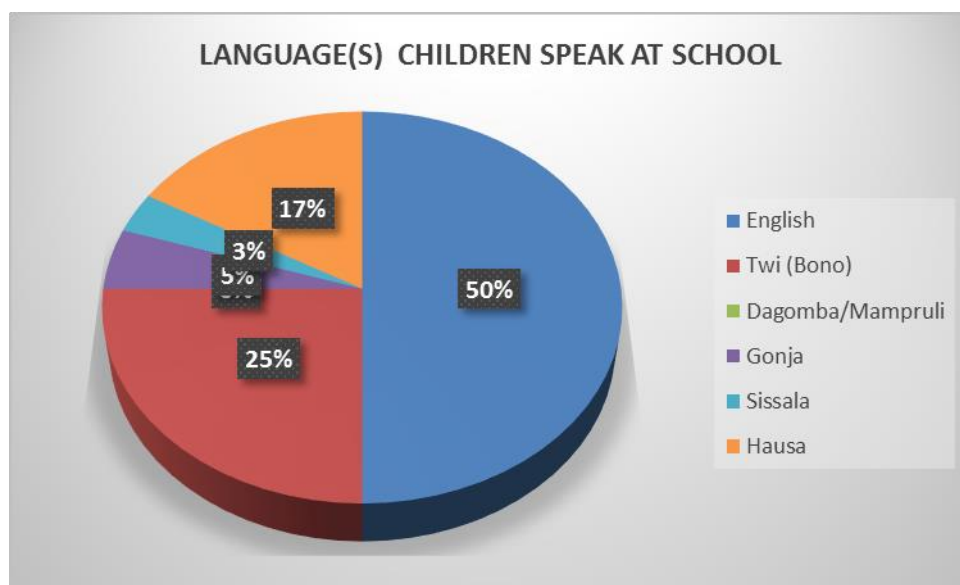


Figure 2 (b). Language(s) Children Speak at School

Figure 2 (a) illustrates the languages spoken at home by children of couples of different languages. Of the sixty (60) children who answered the questionnaire, twenty (20) representing 33% of the respondents said they

spoke Twi/Bono at home and fifteen (15) of them representing 25% said they spoke English at home. Three (3), six (6), four (4), and twelve (12), thus 5%, 10%, 7% and 20%, respectively, said they spoke Dagomba/Mampruli, Gonja, Sissala, and Hausa, respectively, at home. The responses show that English and Twi/Bono are the major unmarked codes used at home, and other languages such as Dagomba/Mampruli, Gonja, Sissala, and Hausa are also used at home by a minority of the respondents.

Figure 2 (b) shows the languages spoken at school by children of couples of different languages. Of the total number of sixty (60) children who answered the questionnaire, thirty (30), representing 50% indicated that they spoke English at school while fifteen (15) representing 25% said they spoke Twi/Bono at school. Three (3) people spoke Gonja, two (2) people spoke Sissala, and ten (10) spoke Hausa. These numbers represent 5%, 3%, and 17%, respectively. None of the respondents indicated speaking Dagomba or Mampruli at school though these languages are within the repertoires of the children (see, for instance, Figure 2(a)).

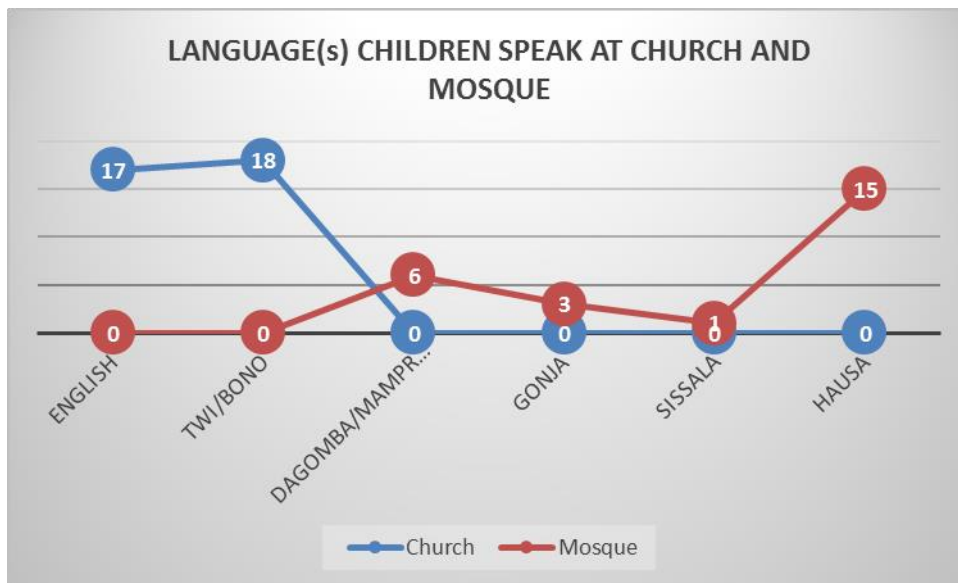


Figure 2 (c). Language(s) Children Speak at Church and at Mosque

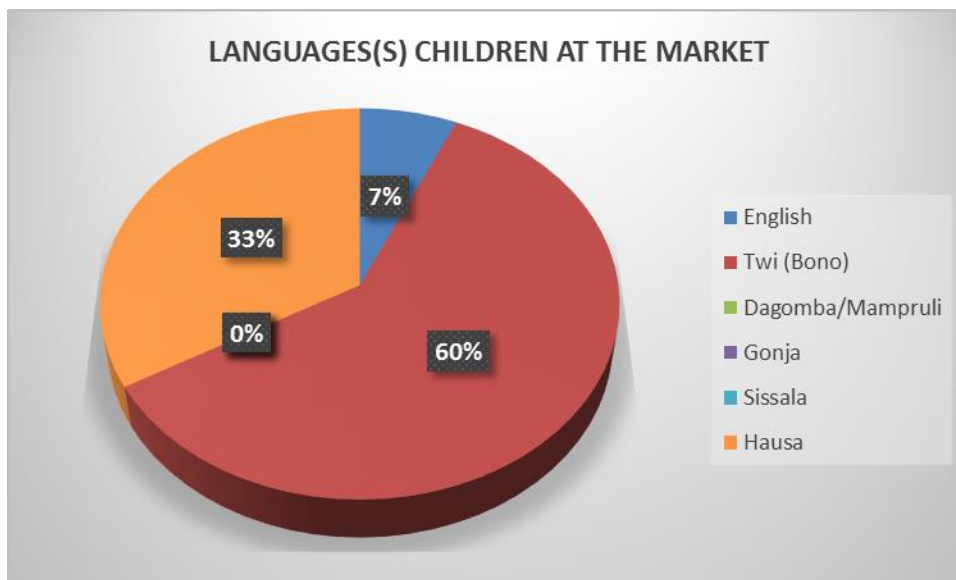


Figure 2 (d). Language(s) Children Speak at the Market

Figure 2 (c) illustrates the languages used by respondents in religious contexts, thus, both at church and at mosque. Of the sixty (60) respondents, eighteen (18) representing 30% indicated that they spoke Twi/Bono at church, and seventeen (17) of them representing 28% said they spoke English at church. Fifteen (15) of them representing 25% said they spoke Hausa at the mosque, six (6) of them representing 10% said they spoke

Dagomba/Mampruli at the mosque, three (3) of them representing 5% said they spoke Gonja at the mosque, and one (1) person representing 2% spoke Sissala at the mosque.

Figure 2 (d) shows the languages spoken at the market by children of couples of different languages in Techiman Municipality in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. Of the sixty (60) children that answered the questionnaire, thirty-six (36) of them representing 60% said they spoke Twi/Bono in the market, Twenty (20) of them representing 33% indicated that they spoke Hausa, and four (4) of them representing 7% said they spoke English at the market and. None of the respondents stated they spoke Dagomba/Mampruli, Gonja, or Sissala in the market.

Figures 2 (a – d) show that children of couples of different languages are multilingual in almost all the major languages spoken in the Techiman Municipality in the Brong Ahafo Region. At home, almost all the children whose fathers or mothers have some level of formal education spoke either English or Twi/Bono. This further feeds into the findings of Heller (2015) that the students in Françias Avance class spoke French only and those in Françias General Class spoke both French and English since they were the languages spoken by the teachers indicating how language use within a given context influences the code choices of other interlocutors. Similarly, the use of English, for instance, is becoming the unmarked code choice in urban centres in Ghana partly influenced by the education of parents (Afrifa, Anderson and Ansah, 2019)

At school, almost everybody speaks English, but at church and the mosque, depending upon their religious faith, the children choose the language used in either of these domains. In the market, they speak the dominant or default language, Twi/Bono. This also confirms the study by Ansah (2014) that in a multilingual community, the multilingual speaker needs to make the right language choice which principally depends on the domain of usage and the linguistic repertoire of speech participants (cf. Grosjean, 2013).

5.3 Language(s) children speak with parents

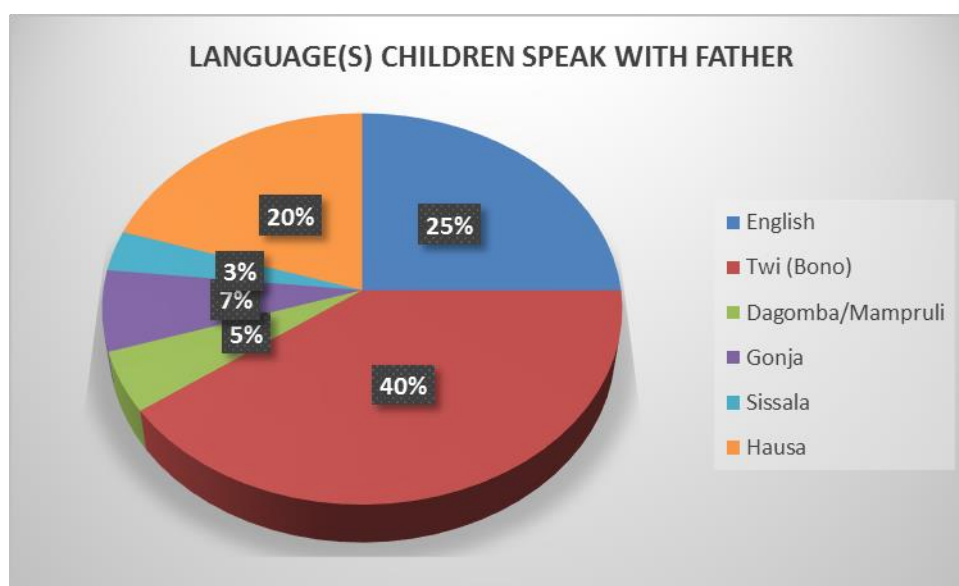


Figure 3 (a). Language(s) Children Speak at the Market

Figure 3 (a) shows the languages children of couples of different languages speak with their fathers. Of the sixty (60) children that answered the questionnaire, twenty-four (24) of them representing 40% spoke Twi/Bono with their fathers, fifteen (15) children representing 25% indicated that they spoke English with their fathers, while twelve (12) of the children representing 20% spoke Hausa with their fathers. Also, four (4) of them representing 7% spoke Gonja with their fathers, three (3) of them representing 5% spoke Dagomba/Mampruli while only two (2) children representing 3% spoke Sissala with their fathers.

Figure 3(b) illustrates the languages spoken by children of couples of different languages with their mothers. Of the total of sixty (60) children that answered the questionnaire, twenty-four (24) of them representing 40% answered that they spoke Twi/Bono with their mothers, fifteen (15) of them representing 25% indicated that they

spoke English, Twelve (12) of the children making up 20% said they spoke Hausa with their mothers, while, four (4) of them representing 7% indicated that they spoke Gonja. Also, three (3) of them representing 5% said they spoke Dagomba/Mampruli with their mothers while two (2) children representing 3% said they spoke Sissala.

The language choices confirm the findings of Myers-Scotton (1993) that in Africa bilinguals use or speak their mother tongue plus an indigenous lingua franca or an alien official language such as English or French.

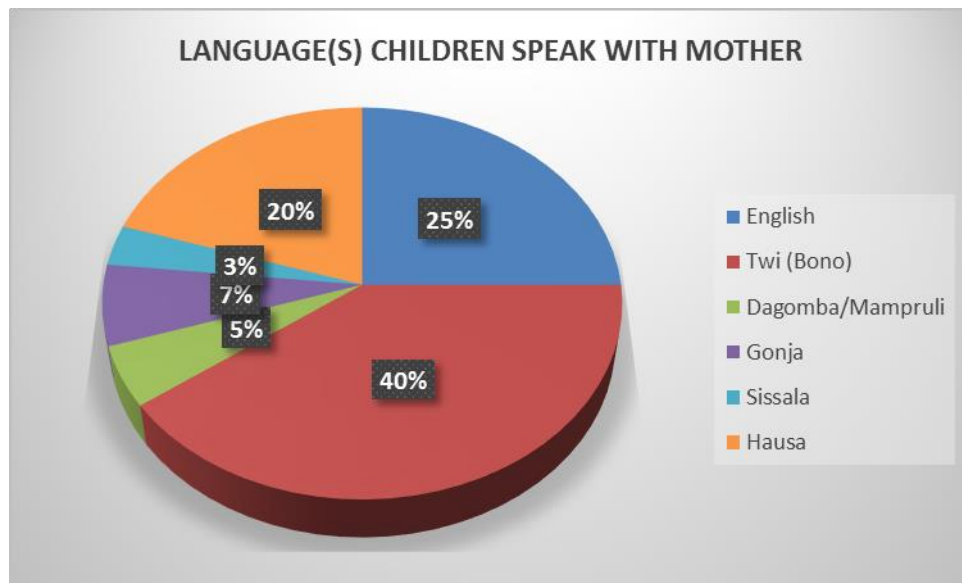


Figure 3 (b). Language(s) Children Speak with Mother

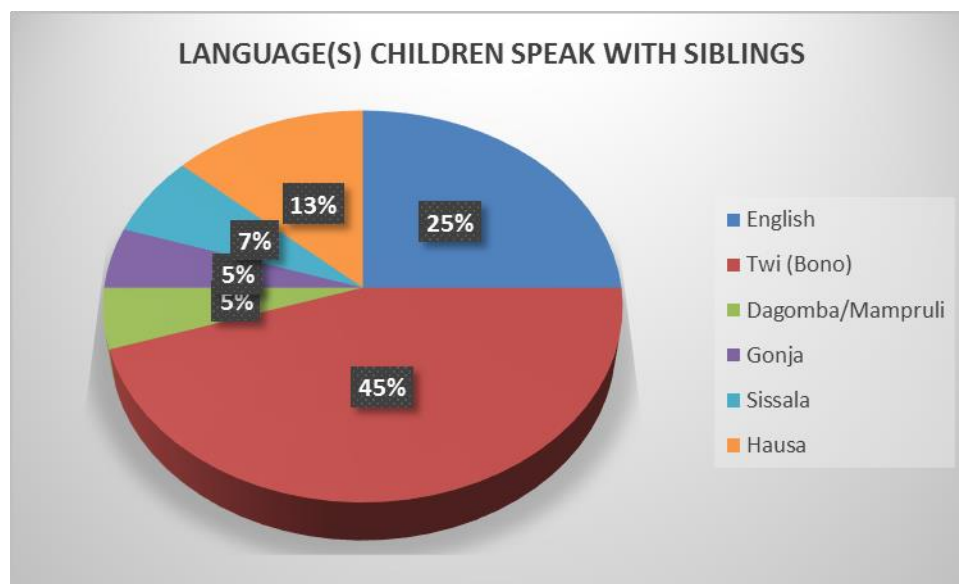


Figure 3 (c). Language(s) Children Speak with Siblings

Figure 3(c) illustrates the languages children of couples of different languages speak with their siblings. Twenty-seven (27) representing 45% said they spoke Twi/Bono, fifteen (15) of the participants representing 25% indicated that they spoke English with their siblings, eight (8) of them representing 13% indicated that they spoke Hausa with their siblings, while four (4) children representing 7% said they spoke Sissala. Three (3) of them representing 5% and another three (3) also representing 5% said they spoke Dagomba/Mampruli and Gonja, respectively.

The results, therefore, show that the majority of the respondents spoke Twi/Bono, English and Hausa as the main languages with their siblings in addition to other languages such as Sissala, Dagomba/Mampruli and Gonja.

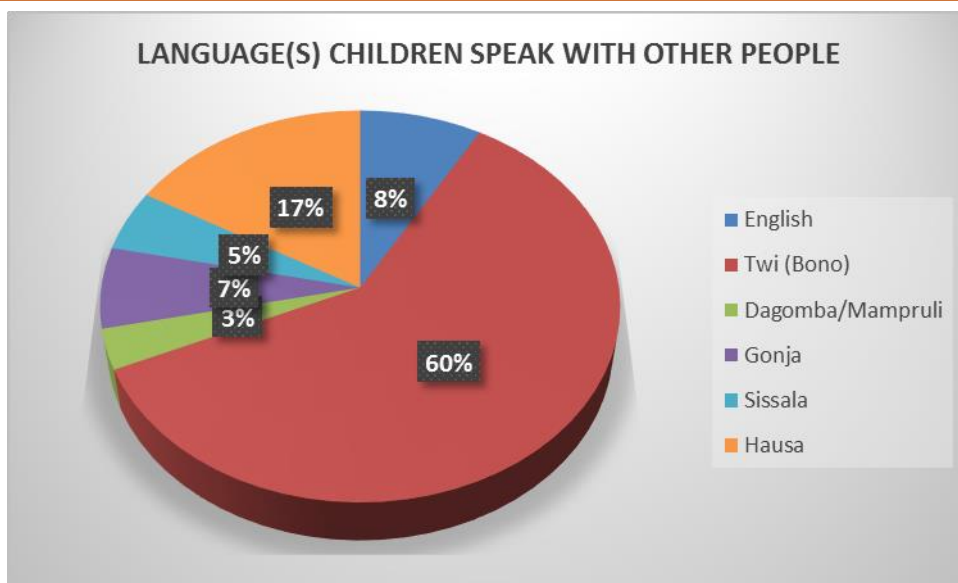


Figure 3 (d). Language(s) Children Speak with other people

Figure 3(d) illustrates the languages children of couples of different languages speak with other people. Of the sixty (60) children of couples of different languages who answered the questionnaire, thirty-six (36) representing 60% said they spoke Twi/Bono with other people, ten (10) representing 17% said they spoke Hausa with other people, five (5) of them representing 8% said they spoke English with others, and four (4) representing 7% said they spoke Gonja with other people. In addition, three (3) of the children representing 5% said they spoke Sissala with other people and two (2) of them representing 3% indicated that they spoke Dogmba/Mampruli with other people.

Figures 3 (a – d) show the languages children of couples of different languages speak with their parents, siblings, and other people. Tables 3 (a) and (b) reveal that almost all the children speak English or Twi/Bono with either their fathers or mothers instead of the indigenous languages of their parents. Table 3 (c) reveals that the children speak more Twi/Bono, the indigenous language of Techiman with their siblings, less English with them and little of Dagomba/Mampruli, Gonja, Sissala, and Hausa with their siblings. Table 3 (d) reveals that children of couples of different languages speak Twi/Bono with other people. This confirms the assertion in Grosjean (1989, 2013) that the bilingual uses each of their languages in communicating with different interlocutors.

5. Benefits of Speaking more than One Language in Domain Areas

Commenting on how speaking more than one language benefits them at home, school, church, mosque, and the market, the respondents provided several benefits which are presented in Table 2. The responses show that the respondents identified various benefits for choosing different languages in various domains including interpersonal reasons such as making friends, communicative reasons such as engaging in conversations easily, and socio-economic reasons such as selling goods and services. The responses, therefore, show that the linguistic repertoire of the respondents are resource they rely on in their daily communications and within various domains.

Table 2. The benefits of speaking more than one language in various domains

Domain	Benefit
Home	- participate easily in conversations at home
School	- participate in classroom activities - play roles - participate in out-of-classroom activities - make friends
Church	- make friends



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - play roles - participate in activities - read the Bible and other Christian books
Mosque	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - make friends - play roles - participate in activities - read the Quran and other Islamic books
Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sell goods and services - buy goods and services - make friends

6. Findings and Conclusions

The study investigates the language used for communication by children of parents who do not speak the same language, explores the possible domain areas of language choice, and the benefits derived from choosing more than one language. The key findings from the study include:

- a. that the formal educational background of most couples of different languages in the Techiman Municipality influences their choice of English as the lingua franca which greatly influences the language choice of their children at home; in addition to speaking the dominant indigenous language of the community, which is Twi/Bono.
- b. that the children of Ghanaian couples of different languages in Techiman choose a particular code or language in a particular domain area. For example, at home, they speak English (if both parents speak English at home and it is the language spoken to them from the beginning); at school, they speak English, Twi/Bono and or other dominant languages; at church or mosque, they speak the dominant language used for religious activities; and at the market, they speak Twi/Bono. Hence, the choice of a particular language as the unmarked or marked code is dependent on the domain.
- c. that the children of Ghanaian couples of different languages in Techiman are multilingual in the dominant languages.
- d. that the children of Ghanaian couples of different languages in the Techiman Municipality enjoy certain benefits for being bilingual or multilingual speakers, which provides the opportunity for easy participation in conversation, participation in classroom activities, participation in church and mosque activities, and playing roles in school, church, mosque, and making friends.

The study concluded from the findings that the children of couples of different languages in the Techiman Municipality speak English and/or the dominant lingua franca of the community Twi/Bono at home with their parents who do not speak each other's language because that was the language introduced to them growing up. In addition, the children have also adopted different code choices or languages based on their interlocutors and the context of communication. Therefore, the findings from this study contribute to the understanding of language use in multilingual families and have implications for language maintenance where dominant languages may be actively used compared to the use of minority languages at home where the couple have different linguistic backgrounds.

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Yes

Conflict of interest

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