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Multilingualism and language practices of Nigerien migrants in Ghana

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at examining language socialisation practices of members of two groups of migrants of Nigerien origin living in Ghana, i.e. Tamasheque-speaking beggars in Accra and Hausa/Zambarima/Buzu-speaking hawkers at the Akuapem Ridge. We examine the migrants' language practices in various domains, such as work and home, interrogate whether such practices reflect the level of socioeconomic integration they experience and ascertain the role that members of the host communities play in their language socialisation. The Communities of Practice (CofP) framework, an ethnographic approach (which involves long-term observation and unstructured recorded interviews) is employed in the collection of data on the migrants' language practices. However, two sets of data, from questionnaire surveys in Accra and the Akuapem Ridge, were collected to help describe these host communities' language practices, which the migrants are expected to encounter. Batibo's triglossic structure model was relied on in conducting those surveys and in interpreting the data. This study finds that there is strong correlation between a migrant group's socioeconomic integration and their sociolinguistic integration: while adult Tamasheque-speaking beggars are generally unable to learn any new languages in Ghana because they choose to remain marginalised, their children, who are the ones who beg and are the bread winners, as well as the hawkers, who sell wares roaming streets along the Ridge, typically get to learn at least Akan, the dominant local language of their host communities.

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Diglossia; language in migration; language socialisation; sociolinguistic integration; triglossia

1. Introduction

Studies (e.g. Ottaviano & Perri, 2006; Alarcón & Parella, 2013) have shown that when migrants move from one society to another, whether in search of greener pastures, education or trade, especially across linguistic borders, they often experience language re-socialisation and that the degree of the re-socialisation normally determines the degree to which they are integrated socioeconomically and sociolinguistically into the host community. An important determinant of the nature of re-socialisation is the migrants' 'attitudes towards self, the target language and the people who speak it' (Richard-Amato, 1998, p. 58). Also, important is the attitude of members of the host community.

In this study, we are guided by the above findings as we investigate the sociolinguistic and socioeconomic integration of two Nigerien groups in Ghana, referred to here as 'Nigerien beggars' (or beggars) and 'Nigerien hawkers' (or hawkers). The beggars, who have settled in Accra, normally live as family units, comprising a mother and her child (ren) or a father and his child(ren), for it is often the case that one parent remains at home in Niger; of course, a few couples (e.g. the man interviewed in extract 1 below and one of his two wives) have come to Accra along with their children. The hawkers, on the other hand, reside at the Akuapem Ridge, which is located in the Akuapem Municipality of the Eastern Region of Ghana.¹ The hawkers are predominantly energetic young men who trade in all sorts of wares such as shoes, CDs, body lotion, and perfumes.

The beggars have migrated from the northern and southwestern parts of Niger, specifically Filingue. To get to Accra, they travel through Bolgatanga, Tamale, and Kumasi. Tamasheque is their indigenous language although some of them would arrive with a fair knowledge of Hausa and Nigerian Pidgin English, which they acquired during their previous stays in Nigeria. French is the official language of Niger, so some of them have some proficiency in it as well. On arrival in Accra, members of family units lodge in makeshift structures called 'kiosks'² and use their mother tongue, Tamasheque, as their home language.

The dark-skinned hawkers, who hail from Tilaberi, Dingazi Banda, and Baleyara in Niger, are normally called 'Abotsi,' a Hausa word which means friend. According to one of the respondents, the Imam in charge of Aburi Central Mosque,³ some of these young men make short business stopovers at various places in Ghana before reaching the Ridge (e.g. Bawku, Techiman, and Accra); however, because such stopovers are brief, they are not able to learn the languages of those speech communities. They speak Hausa, Zambarima (Zaama), or Buzu as their mother tongue. Some of them speak more than one of these three Nigerien languages fluently. They generally live in Zongo communities⁴ as well as in compound houses⁵ with people whom they may not share a common language.

Our investigation reveals that living condition in Niger is the primary cause of migration and that many of the migrants, in both groups, remain closely in touch with families back in Niger. Indeed, with the begging families, as noted earlier, usually only one parent comes to Ghana with their children, who do the actual begging for them. The hawkers, who, as also noted, are usually young men, leave their families in Niger and so visit them as soon as they have made enough money. The narrative in the following interview with a beggar (conducted in West African Pidgin English) is typical:

Extract 1:

- | | | |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Interviewer: | So why be say you come for Ghana? | So why did you come to Ghana? |
| Participant: | Niger rain no dey fall, na dat be why we come Ghana. Some people de come de no dey want go again, de wan stay here but their family dey there. | In Niger, it doesn't rain, that is why we came to Ghana. Some people do not go back, they want to live here but their family remains there. |
| Interviewer: | So your children some dey there (Niger)? | So your children, are they there (Niger)? |
| Participant: | Dis be my children. Two womens na only one I bring. | These are my children. [I have] Two girls, I have brought only one [with me]. |

Other factors claimed to be a source of motivation for their coming to Ghana is the relative peace in the country and the fact that they are not subjected to strenuous residence permit regulations. A participant (a beggar) had this to say:

Extract 2:

Participant: Ghana, de no dey worry us ... You go Nigeria them dey fight every day. Here de no dey worry us. You go fit stay here ten years nobody go worry you. Me I don stay Ghana longtime nobody can tell me anything. I stay I stay the time come I dey go my country.

In Ghana, they do not worry us ... In Nigeria, they fight every day. Here they do not worry us. You can stay here for ten years without anyone worrying you. I have lived in Ghana many years [but] nobody can tell me anything. When I choose to reside here I do just that, when I choose to return to my country, I leave.

The rest of the paper is organised as follows: Section 2 discusses the literature while Section 3 presents the theoretical frameworks and data collection methodologies used. Section 4 discusses the data and outlines the findings. Section 5 concludes the paper.

2. Related studies

Although language is the primary means of communication for people, it may constitute a barrier that prevents them from integrating into a new community. Many scholars (e.g. Alarcón & Parella, 2013; Dustmann, 1999; Garrett & Holcomb, 2005; Haque, 2011; Slonim-Nevo, Mirsky, Rubinstien, & Nauck, 2009) have studied the issue of linguistic integration with special reference to the question, how migrants' linguistic integration affects them and their host communities in terms of socioeconomic well-being. This section reviews the related studies on trends in migration and identity development and in multilingualism, language socialisation patterns and linguistic integration.

We begin with Alarcón and Parella (2013), who examine the linguistic integration of the descendants of foreign immigrants in Catalonia. In their study, they focus on the strategies the immigrants adopt toward learning Catalan and developing Catalan writing skills. They note that there is variation in the linguistic and socioeconomic integration of the generations, depending on the varieties used. They stress that the young immigrant generation in Catalonia are functional beyond the home because they possess skills in Catalan and could express themselves in the language.

Garrett and Holcomb (2005) investigate how immigrant students with limited English adjust to the formal school system in the United States of America. The study highlights the importance of migrants' involvement in host community life to their sociolinguistic integration. The students studied became involved in community services and their interactions with the local people enabled them to improve their performance in English at school. Another study which stresses the importance of community involvement in immigrants' sociolinguistic integration is Slonim-Nevo et al. (2009). They observe that the host country's laws and cultural environment play a major role in the immigrants' either partial or full integration.

Haque (2011) examines the language practices and language policies of an Indian migrant family in Finland to understand the role the macro and micro language policies play in the successful integration of the migrants. Haque finds that the parents and other family members made a conscious effort to transmit their languages to their children as a sign of native language maintenance in a foreign land while at the same time adopting English (India's official language) as their lingua franca with members of the host country, Finland. With English as their solution to language barrier with local people, it is easy to see why they could not be expected to learn and master Swedish and Finnish, the two main languages of Finland. In a similar study, Tannenbaum and Berkovich

(2005) investigated the correlation that exists between family relations and language maintenance among 180 adolescents who migrated from Israel to Greece. They conclude that intra-family language maintenance policy is rooted and connected to how peacefully members coexist.

Studies done in Africa on languages in migration tended to be subsumed under the more general themes of multilingualism and urbanisation, which are consequences of ongoing widespread rural–urban drift in the continent. Two publications which have captured the spirit of the prevailing discourse are Batibo's (2005) book and the collection of articles edited by McLaughlin (2009). These studies present the picture in Africa of how host (urban) communities are highly multilingual with local languages in constant competition for domains. Batibo, for example, introduces the triglossic structure model with which he shows ably that there are hierarchical relationships among languages in competition for domains (see Section 3 for further details on this model). Many chapters in McLaughlin (2009) present the picture of how in typical African cities south of the Sahara there have emerged powerful lingua francas that are hardly indigenous languages of the cities. One case, discussed by Essegbey, is Accra. He shows that although Ga is the indigenous language of Accra, it has lost most of the public domains to Akan, retaining a high degree of vitality only in the original neighbourhood of the Ga township. Also, Bokamba's (2009) chapter provides insight into the spread of Lingala in the Congo Basin despite not being an indigenous language of the area: it has emerged as a regional lingua franca and main language of two capitals, Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo) and Brazzaville (Republic of Congo). Adeniran (2009), for his part, presents the very interesting case of Porto Novo, a city in francophone Benin where 12 languages compete for domains. Of the 12 though, 4, namely Egun, French, Yoruba, and English, have emerged as the predominant languages. That chapter highlights one interesting fact also: that French is losing ground to English as a neutral lingua franca in a francophone country. Thus the picture emerges in the two books that in multilingual African cities specifiable languages take control of given domains of language use and that it is predictable what language(s) a migrant will be exposed to from the day of arrival.

This study benefits from the insights available in all these studies, especially about the roles that host communities play in migrants' language re-socialisation. Also, of benefit to this study is the finding in most of the studies reviewed that the degree of linguistic integration that migrants experience critically reflects how socioeconomically integrated they are in a host community.

3. Methods of data collection and theoretical framework

Two sets of data were collected and analysed for this study. One involved the language practices of the Nigerien migrants, and the other involved the language practices of members of the host communities, Accra and the Akuapem Ridge. The rationale for collecting the two sets of data is that the one on the local people's language practices was expected to provide insights about the language contexts that migrants come to meet and the one on migrants' language practices was aimed at documenting levels of their sociolinguistic integration.

Separate methods were used in collecting and analysing these categories of data. We begin with the method used in collecting data on the language practices of the migrants.

The data in this category were collected in January 2017, following the ethnographic approach developed by Lave and Wenger (1991) and popularised by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) for the investigation of language use patterns across domains. Called Communities of Practice (CofP), it enjoins the researchers to do long-term observation of respondents' language practices in specific *communities of practice* (i.e. social groupings that individuals construct for and by themselves). Two main strategies were used in carrying out this type of data collection in this study: participant observation and interviews.

The participant observation was targeted at gaining an understanding of the motivations for, and strategies of, participants' language learning and linguistic practices, bearing in mind such questions as what languages the immigrants speak in especially public places (e.g. the commercial streets and the mosques) where they are likely to have to interact with local people. The interviews were aimed at obtaining further information on the participants' sociolinguistic backgrounds and their language socialisation patterns. Some of the interviews were conducted with the beggars in the streets during their peak periods of begging because it was sometimes difficult to meet them at home. It was easier to spend time with the hawkers during their working hours. The interviews with them were recorded with an audio recorder after informed consent was sought from them.

As noted, data collection on the language practices of local people in Accra and at the Ridge was deemed necessary because findings from such data will help us project clearly the language contexts migrants are exposed to. We relied heavily on Batibo's (2005) triglossic structure model, which he based on a 1978 work by Abdulaziz-Mkilifi, in collecting and interpreting this data. The model assumes the notion of 'triglossia,' the situation whereby 'three languages are spoken by the same community, each with a distinct and complementary role' (Batibo, 2005, p. 16). Most people in a triglossic community are typically multilingual and do possess communicative skills in each of the three languages, which they generally use mutually exclusively in separate domains. Batibo maps out which language(s) speakers encounter and use in specific domains as follows in Figure 1.

For the explication of the diagram, Batibo takes, as his point of reference, typical post-colonial African countries, especially urban communities in those countries. In the top row lies the official language of the country, which is used in all highly prestigious (H) roles like government business, higher education, science and technology and international relations. In the middle row lies languages that perform lower (L) roles than those associated with the official language, e.g. dominant indigenous languages which

H	Official or technical medium (ex-colonial language)	
L	Lingual franca (dominant indigenous language)	H
	Language of limited communication (minority language)	L

Figure 1. The triglossic structure model (adapted from Batibo, 2005, pp. 17–18).

are used in inter-group communication, in mass media and in local markets and commercial streets. In the bottom row lies languages of limited communicative functions such as media of intra-group and intra-family communication; these are minority languages. Batibo (2005) explains that the three categories of languages engage in a ‘double overlapping diglossic’ (p.17) relationship because, on one hand, an official language and each of the majority languages are in an H–L diglossic relationship while on the other hand (i.e. at the same time) each majority language is in another H–L diglossic relationship with the minority languages. This is why in the diagram the middle row is labelled as both L (low) and H (high): it is L in relation to the H language in the top row but is labelled H in relation to the L languages in the bottom row.

The triglossic structure model therefore anticipates the language practices locals engage in at formal public places (the top H domains) and at informal public places (the middle, L–H, domains) will in large part influence the kind of language re-socialisation a group of migrants eventually experience, because it is in these domains where migrants are likely to encounter local people.

Questionnaires were used to investigate the language practices of locals across the domains; i.e. separate but largely identical questionnaires were used for the Accra and the Ridge surveys. Locals at each site were asked questions about language choices they normally make in each of the three domains, specifically: (i) formal public spaces, e.g. government offices, formal business offices like banking halls and offices of telecommunication companies, schools and hospitals; (ii) informal public spaces, e.g. market places, along the streets in business centres, in public transport and bus terminals, at major public gatherings such as funeral and festival grounds; and (iii) private spaces, e.g. home and other communication situations where speakers interact with people from their own ethnic backgrounds. A report on our findings is provided in Section 4.

4. Findings and discussion

There are two categories of reports. The first one (Section 4.1) seeks to capture the nature of the language situation in Accra and on the Ridge as per participant observation about their choices of language in various domains. The second part of the report (Section 4.2) provides ethnographic accounts of levels of language re-socialisation of members of the two groups of Nigerien migrants.

4.1 Language situation in the two host communities

4.1.1 Language situation in Accra

A total of 100 residents of Accra were surveyed in Madina, Atomic Junction, Okponglo and Tetteh Quarshie Interchange. These areas were chosen for the survey because these are the places where we encountered the Nigerien beggars whose language practices we are interested in. Of the 100 respondents, Akan speakers constitute 30, Ewe speakers 34, Gã speakers 10, Dangme speakers 6, and others 20 (including speakers of Larteh, Kusaasi, Kokomba, Gonja, Logba, Dagbani, Wala, Bisa, Kotokoli and Buzu). The majority of the 100 (78 respondents) said that they have at least secondary level education and that they can speak English. Of the 32 who acknowledged they have less than secondary level education, 15 claimed that they can speak English. No tests were done as part of this study

to verify these claims. 28 of the respondents were aged between 21 and 30 years, 40 of them between 31 and 40 years, 20 between 41 and 45 years, and 12 above 46. Thus the survey captured a generally youthful (Pidgin) English-speaking people.

Respondents were asked questions about their language choices in each of the three categories of domains following Batibo's (2005) triglossic structure model outlined in the previous section. When asked what language they normally speak (i.e. when they were the first to speak) to officials in public spaces, 72 indicated they speak English and 10 claimed they speak Ghanaian Pidgin English instead. Twelve respondents of Akan origin and 4 of Gã origin who have less than secondary school education claimed they speak Akan and Gã respectively in those circumstances. Surprisingly, two Ewe speakers with secondary school educational background also claimed they prefer speaking Ewe in offices in Accra.

The picture regarding language choices in informal public spaces differs markedly from the one seen above in the formal domains. Respondents were asked separate questions about their choices in the market places and in the commercial streets. Akan is the clear favourite language of both places, with 72 claiming to use it at the market and 76 claiming to use it in the commercial streets. Significantly, only eight respondents claimed they use (Pidgin) English in both the market and the street. This is clearly indicative of the fact that Akan is the lingua franca of informal public spaces in the two communities. Other local languages fared poorly, but it is the case of Gã that is remarkable, given that it is the indigenous language of Accra. Of the 18 respondents who named it in relation to market places, only 8 are non-Gã speakers. When it comes to the language of the commercial streets, only 8 respondents, all of them Gã, named it. The only other local language named in connection with markets and streets is Ewe: 6 in relation to the markets and 4 in relation to the streets. The dominance of Akan in public places in Accra has been reported earlier by Essegbey (2009). He reports among other things that even in buses journeying from Accra Central to Chorkor, which is a predominantly Gã area, the language that bus conductors use to address passengers is the Twi dialect of Akan even if the conductors and the passengers happen to be native speakers of Gã. Bibiebome (2010) arrived at the same conclusion about the profile of Akan in predominantly Gã areas.

Regarding language choices in private spaces, specifically at home, the indications are that while all Akan respondents claimed they use their mother tongue at home, some respondents from each of the other ethnic groups claimed they now speak a language other than their mother tongue at home. In order of dominance, Akan, English and Hausa are the beneficiaries of the language shift at home.

In the light of these responses, the triglossic structure of Accra may be represented as follows (Figure 2).

4.1.2 Language situation at the Akuapem Ridge

As with the Accra survey, effort is made to capture as many indigenous ethnic groups as possible. Of the 100 respondents, 28 were Ewe, 24 Akan, 8 Gã, 40 others (including speakers of Dangme, Kyerepong, Frafra, Nkonya, Santrokofi, Anum, Wala, Gonja, and Dagaba). Sixty-two of the respondents have attained at least secondary level education. With respect to age, only 14 of them were 30 years old or younger. The majority (76) fell between 31 and 45. Only 10 were above 45.

Only two languages were mentioned in respect of language choices for communication with officials in public offices. Not surprisingly, English claims 78 respondents while Akan

H	Formal Public Spaces: (English with limited room for Akan especially with speakers who have some challenge with English)	
L	Informal Public Spaces: (Akan and, to a limited extent, English/Pidgin English and Gã)	H
	Private Spaces: (mother tongues, language shift by some to Akan or to English or Hausa)	L

Figure 2. The triglossic structure of language choice in Accra.

claims the remaining 22. This reflects roughly the picture in Accra. The picture with respect to language choices in market places and in commercial streets at the Ridge is slightly different from those in Accra: Akan absolutely dominates, with 96 at the market and 94 in the streets. There is also widespread language shift to Akan in homes at the Ridge. Beside the 24 native speakers of Akan, an additional 26 claimed it is their home language. This situation is not surprising because Akan is the indigenous language of most of the towns in the area. Of the 28 Ewe respondents, only 18 said they speak Ewe at home. Gã speakers seem to be doing better as all eight respondents claimed to use it at home.

Based on the foregoing, **Figure 3** may be representative of the triglossic structure of language use in domains at the Akuapem Ridge.

In what follows, we discuss the language re-socialisation of members of the two Nigerien migrant groups bearing in mind our findings about the languages that locals claim to speak in public spaces in Accra and at the Ridge.

4.2 Language re-socialisation of the migrants

4.2.1 Language re-socialisation of the beggars

We have observed that members of the Nigerien begging families may be classified into two categories in terms of the levels of direct communicative engagement they have

H	Formal Public Spaces: (English with limited room for Akan)	
L	Informal Public Spaces: (Almost exclusively Akan)	H
	Private Spaces: (mother tongues, language shift by speakers of some other languages to Akan)	L

Figure 3. Triglossic structure of language choice at Akuapem Ridge.

with Ghanaians: the adult beggars (the parents and sometimes grandparents) and their children.

The adults typically sit under trees or any shady places near traffic lights at major intersections, such as the one in front of the University of Ghana and the one at the Accra Mall. From their locations, they observe their children as they beg motorists and passersby for money. From time to time, the children submit their ‘proceeds’ to their parents (sometimes, the parents call out to them to do so). In this self-imposed setup, the adult beggars create very little room to directly interact with Ghanaians. As observed in Section 3.1.1 (see what is in the middle row in Figure 2), the local languages they could have become exposed to in encounters with locals in the streets is Akan and to a limited extent Gã. As it turned out, no adult beggar claimed having speaking knowledge of Akan or Gã. Some of them speak (Pidgin) English, as is the case with the beggar interviewed in Extract 3 below who made us understand that they, the adults, learnt it before coming to Ghana.

Extract 3:

Interviewer:	When did you come to Ghana?	When did you come to Ghana?
Adult Beggar:	Long time.	Long time.
Interviewer:	Like roughly how many years? Two, Five, Ten, how many years. Can you remember?	Like roughly how many years? Two, Five, Ten, how many years. Can you remember?
Adult Beggar:	[Speaks in their native language to the child.]	[Speaks in their native language to the child.]
Child Beggar:	<i>ɔse ɔakyɛ wɔ ha.</i>	He said that he's been around for quite some time.
Interviewer:	Do you speak Twi?	Do you speak Twi?
Adult Beggar:	No	No
Interviewer:	So how did he [the child] learn to speak English and Twi?	So how did he learn to speak English and Twi?
Adult Beggar:	He dey waka, he find some people dey speak with him. Na so dem dey learn Twi.	He walks, he finds some people who speak [it] with him. That is why they [the children] learn Twi.
Interviewer:	Then let them teach you so that you will learn from them.	Then let them teach you so that you will learn from them.
Adult Beggar:	Me I be Pikin I learn French and English.	When I was a child I learned French and [Pidgin] English.
Interviewer:	So are you happy that they can speak the Twi and the English?	So are you happy that they can speak the Twi and the English?
Adult Beggar:	Dem dey waka dey hear from people wey dey speak English and sometimes they learn from the mates.	They walk [and as they do so] they hear from people who speak English and sometimes they learn from the [play] mates.
Interviewer:	So when you speak with him do you use Tamazheque?	So when you speak with him do you use the Tamazheque.
Adult Beggar:	Yes.	Yes.
Interviewer:	So what language does he speak with his sister? [pointing to the female child]	So what language does he speak with his sister?
Adult Beggar:	It's Tamazheque.	It's Tamazheque.
Interviewer:	She no dey hear Twi?	She does not understand Twi?
Adult Beggar:	Small, small.	Very little.

Another adult beggar claimed that some of them use Hausa (a Nigerian language) with some locals but given that Hausa is not a dominant language in the streets of Accra as per our survey, it seems predictable that they will not find frequent use for it there.

The children, on the other hand, position themselves on the roads and on the sidewalks. They have routine game plans about how to do ‘business.’ There are those who would target motorists as they wait for their turn to proceed. Those with open car windows are preferred. Often, a child would persist with one target for the entire duration of the wait. There are, also, children who go after pedestrians. They would pick such ‘clients’ a

distance away from their target bus stop and walk closely with them, often attempting to play with their hands or their clothes. It is often an irritating experience for the pedestrians, as the reaction of a ‘Passerby’ in the following exchange exhibits; the child beggar was approximately 10 years of age:

Extract 4:

Child Beggar:	Ma me sika!	Give me money!
Passerby:	Herh! Mtew, go away! [frowning] Hwe nehō fi bi.	Herh! [sound of disgust] go away! [frowning] Look, how so dirty she is!

Note, however, that the child’s default language of begging is the Twi dialect of Akan, which they are in the process of learning. It appears that the children take delight in trying to speak Akan with locals. This is evident in the interview in Extract 3 above where the child spoke Akan without any prompting. The parents understand very well how their children are managing to learn Akan; they interact with locals more (see extract 3 above). The child beggars cannot be said to be fluent in Akan and can sometimes produce constructions that are pidginised versions of the target Akan expressions. An instance of this occurs in extract (5) below where the child says *ɔse ɛkyɛ ɔbeyɛ wei* ‘She says it takes a long time for her to do this’ instead of *ɔse ɔbekyɛ ansa na ɔawie wei*.

The children, nonetheless, speak (Pidgin) English, too. They are, therefore, bilinguals and are, sometimes, called upon to serve as interpreters between their parents and local people. This scenario was played out during one of our interviews with a begging mother. During the interview, the interviewer found that the lady, Adult Beggar, a mother of two, engages in another business besides using her children to beg; she makes bead necklaces. However, upon interrogation, the interviewer realised she makes the beads only upon request and that it had been quite a long time since there was a request. What is noteworthy is the child’s effortless exchange with Interviewer when she had to serve as interpreter between mother and interviewer:

Extract 5:

Interviewer:	So have you ever done this to sell before?	
Adult Beggar:	Yes.	
Interviewer:	Do the people buy from you or from the kids?	
Adult Beggar:	They buy from me. If I go to the mosque I sell it.	
Interviewer:	So how much is this?	
Adult Beggar:	Sometimes 10 Ghana [Cedis]. [Participant speaks to the child in their native language.]	
Child:	<i>ɔse ɛkyɛ ɔbeyɛ wei</i>	She says it takes a long time for her to do this.
Interviewer:	<i>ɔse sɛn?</i>	What did she say?
Child:	<i>ɔse ɔbekyɛ ɔbeyɛ wei</i>	She says it will take a while to do this.
Adult Beggar:	If somebody say she like it I do it. [Speaks in the L1 to the child.]	If someone says she likes it, then I do it.
Child:	<i>ɔse obi ɔkakyɛrɛ no sɛ ɔbeyɛ ama no ɔbekyɛ ansana ɔbeyɛ ama no.</i>	She says when someone tells her that she wants one of those (beads), it will take a while for her to do it for her.
Interviewer:	<i>Meka kyɛrɛ no sɛ ɔnyɛ bi mma me a ɔbeyɛ?</i> [The child interprets it to the Participant and he also speaks to the child in their L1.]	If I ask her to do some for me, will she do it?
Child:	<i>ɔse wokɔtɔ wei bi a ɔde beyɛ ama wo.</i>	She says she will buy some of this to do it for you.
Interviewer:	So apart from Twi do you speak Gã? Onu Gã?	So apart from Twi, do you speak Gã? Do you speak Gã?
Child:	I no dey speak Gã.	I do not speak Gã.

Some of the children were asked to explain how they have come to learn Akan. In the next extract, two children attributed their success with language socialisation to Ghanaian peers they meet off the street when they are not begging:

Extract 6:

Interviewer:	Do you have Ghanaian Friends?	
Child 1:	Yes.	
Interviewer:	How many of them do you have?	
Child 1:	I don't know. They are plenty.	
Interviewer:	For Kaneshie?	At Kaneshie?
Child 1:	Yes and [Kwame Nkrumah] Circle.	
Interviewer:	So when you are playing with them what language do you speak?	
Child 1:	Some, they speak Twi.	Some of them speak Twi.
Interviewer:	What about you? What language do you speak to them?	
Child 2:	Me too I dey speak Twi to them.	I also speak Twi to them.
Interviewer:	Everything that they speak to you, do you understand?	
Child 2:	Yes.	

We also became curious to find out why the children are not learning Gã, the indigenous language of Accra. We found out that like the child in the extract 5 above (see the last part of that extract), they do not frequently encounter people who speak Gã to them. We generally expected this explanation given our finding about the vitality of Gã in public places in Accra, a finding which confirms findings by Essegbey (2009) and Bibiebome (2010).

4.2.2. Language re-socialisation of the Hawkers

We found that the hawkers on the Akuapem Ridge have become far more socioeconomically and socio-linguistically integrated than their country folk who beg in Accra. Two main factors account for their more favourable situation: they dwell in compound houses alongside Ghanaians and they engage actively in 'acceptable business' ventures with Ghanaians; they walk along major roads in the towns on the Ridge selling such items as shoes, CDs, body lotions, and perfumes.

In other words, they routinely use the (Twi dialect of) Akan and (Pidgin) English in much the same way as the average child beggar in Accra does. Extracts 7 and 8 below illustrate the ease with which some hawkers interacted with locals in Akan:

Extract 7: [A young Ghanaian lady was looking for a lotion seller (an Abotsi, the local name for the hawkers) who was moving from house to house. Another hawker met her on the walkway and enquired from her what she wanted to buy.]

Lady:	Abotsi, wo nua no wɔ he?	Abotsi, where is your brother?
Hawker:	Wopɛ den?	What do you want?
Lady:	Merehwehwe wo nua no.	I am looking for your brother.
Hawker:	Bra, befa aha, ɔno nie.	Come, pass here, here he is.

Extract 8: [At the market when a hawker (an Abotsi) wants to buy a piece of cloth called 'Akyekyedee akyi' from a wholesaler (obviously to go and retail).]

Hawker:	Maame, wowɔ ntoma a yɛfrɛ no 'Akyekyedee akyi'?	Madam, do you have the piece of cloth called 'The shell of a tortoise'?
Wholesaler:	Daabi, mmom me sister wɔ bi.	No, but my sister has it.
Hawker:		

Wo sister na ɔwɔ ekyire ha yi a? [*pointing toward a direction.*]ɔse epo fa ye sixty-five Ghana [cedis]. Ne boɔ ye den. Mentumi ntɔ. [*He walks away.*]

Your sister who is right there? [*pointing ...*] She says half-piece is sixty-five Ghana Cedis. It is too expensive. I can't buy it. [*He walks away*]

Many of the hawkers speak Akan relatively fluently (i.e. much better than the child beggars), and the reason for this is that they live amongst Ghanaians in compound houses, and presumably interact more with the local (at home and at work).

5. Conclusion

In this paper, we examined language socialisation practices of members of two groups of Nigerian migrants in Ghana: Tamasheque-speaking beggars in Accra and Hausa/Zambarima/Buzu-speaking hawkers on the Akuapem Ridge, to the north of Accra. Guided by the principles of the Communities of Practice framework for data collection, we closely observed members of each group to determine the extent to which the socioeconomic activities they engage in influence the level of sociolinguistic integration they have attained. In order to place the matter of migrants' sociolinguistic integration in perspective, we carried out a questionnaire survey in the two home speech communities and our aim was to map up language situations in public spaces where migrants also encounter local people. This survey was informed by insights from Batibo's (2005) triglossic structure model. It is found that there is a strong correlation between the level of socioeconomic integration of a group and the level of sociolinguistic integration that members attain. This echoes findings in some previous studies (e.g. Ottaviano & Perri, 2006 and Alarcón & Parella, 2013). Specifically, two patterns of language socialisation emerged.

One pattern concerns the hawkers and the child beggars. They typically learn and use Akan, the obviously dominant language of public places in the two speech communities. They also use English with locals, but it is not clear whether they learnt it from Ghanaians. Through our ethnographic study of their language practices, we find that the hawkers and child beggars are able to learn Akan because they are directly exposed to locals in their economic and, to some extent, other contexts (the children claimed they play with Ghanaian peers when they are not begging and the hawkers as noted live in the same houses with Ghanaians).

The other pattern concerns the adult beggars, who present a different, bleak picture about linguistic integration. They are largely unable to learn a language in Ghana, not even Akan. They can, however, communicate with locals in (Pidgin) English, which they learn before coming to Ghana. Their inability to integrate more with locals in a local language is due to the fact that they prefer to isolate themselves from the locals and because they can fall on the (Pidgin) English, and sometimes the Hausa, they already speak.

The different language socialisation patterns exhibited by the adult beggars on the one hand and by the child beggars and hawkers on the other demonstrate that migrants must do more (than local people) toward their sociolinguistic integration. They need to actively engage in integrative socioeconomic activities with the locals. This point is further reflected in the fact that the child beggars are normally less proficient in Akan than the hawkers. Despite the fact as noted that they get to socialise in Akan with Ghanaian peers off the street when they are not begging, those additional contact hours off the

streets fall short of the contact hours the hawkers normally have with fellow tenants when they go home after work.

Notes

1. The area stretches from Peduase through Aburi, Mamfe to Adukrom. The Peduase end of the ridge is about 15 min drive from Adentan, in the Greater Accra Region, while the Adukrom end is about 1 h 15 min drive from Koforidua, the Eastern Regional capital. Akuapem Twi (the variety of Akan spoken natively in the area) is used in most domains, including church, market, and public vehicles.
2. A wooden structure made in the form of a shop in which petty trading is transacted.
3. This Imam was directly involved in bringing most of the hawkers to the Akuapem Ridge.
4. Slum settlements within our cities and bigger towns. The occupants of these settlements are predominantly but not exclusively Muslim immigrants from Northern Ghana and beyond.
5. Compound houses are structures that accommodate two or more households within a single compound, which is a sign of communal living. Each household normally lives in one-bedroom apartment.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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