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## Negotiating Linguistic Disruptions and Connections in Migratory Contexts: Language Practices among Child Migrants in an Urban Market in Ghana

*This article employs ethnographic methods to investigate communicative practices that shape the linguistic repertoires of child migrants in Agbogbloshie, an urban market in Ghana. Similar studies discuss the relationship between language and migration by focusing on language shift and loss among migrants; this article argues that migrants in complex linguistically diverse spaces—motivated by both social and economic dynamics of their space—make linguistic choices while negotiating their daily lives that lead to the development of complex, heterogeneous linguistic repertoires and practices. Data were gathered from interactions at childcare centers, where child migrants spend the day with peers and caregivers, and migrant homes, where child migrants spend the evenings and weekends with their families. The data reveal that while migrant parents negotiate their own multilingual practices with their migrant children, child migrants expand their linguistic repertoires through relationships and interactions with caregivers and peers in childcare centers and neighborhoods, leading to the development of heterogeneous language practices that neither their parents nor caregivers necessarily possess. The article concludes that migration may lead to complex linguistic diversity. The study contributes to Indigenous perspectives on linguistic diversity and our understanding of the structure and nature of superdiversification. [migration, child migrant, multilingualism, Agbogbloshie Kayayei, language contact]*

### Introduction

In this article, ethnographic methods are employed to investigate the communicative practices that shape the linguistic repertoires of child migrants in Agbogbloshie, an urban market in Ghana that has been described as highly multilingual because of the ethnolinguistic diversity among its populations (Ansah, Anderson and Anamzoya 2017).<sup>1,2</sup> According to Blommaert and Rampton (2011, 3), “there are distinctive communicative processes and outcomes involved in migration,” which are important to our understanding of the nature and structure of superdiversification. Following Ansah et al.’s (2017) findings, which point to Agbogbloshie as a potential site for exploring broad sociolinguistic phenomena, this article

investigates how communicative practices of migrants in urban markets may contribute to the nature and structure of super-diversification in urban Ghana. The article describes the communicative practices in migrant homes and preschool/childcare centers in Agbogbloshie and discusses how such practices structure and shape the linguistic repertoires and language practices of child migrants in the space. Thus, while many similar studies on language contact through migration (particularly in urbanized contexts) focus on language shift, this article argues that migrants in complex linguistically diverse spaces may be motivated by both social and economic dynamics of their space to make linguistic choices while negotiating their daily lives that lead to the development of complex linguistic repertoires and complex heterogeneous linguistic practices.

### Background

The African continent has been described as “one of the world’s hotspots of linguistic diversity both at the level of linguistic structure and change and the sociolinguistic configurations and self-representations” (Lüpke and Storch 2013, 267). Linguistic diversity in this context is said to arise from frequent language contact among different ethnolinguistic groups, which leads to widespread, long-term coexistence of multiple languages and situations of complex multilingualism and multilingual practices (Lüpke 2017; Mufwene 2008). This situation is particularly true in urban Africa not merely because of the coexistence of more ethnolinguistically diverse populations but particularly because the multiple languages become resources for “interactionally framed practices” (Blommaert, Collins, and Slembrouck 2005, 197). For instance, in Ghana, linguistic diversity appears more complex in urban centers because there is usually a lot of interaction between small speaker populations who congregate in big cities through rural-urban migration, with other populations either at the workspace or in the compound houses where they live. In Ghana, rural-urban migration is largely motivated by economics.

Female migration is increasing globally because households are in need of income, and more employment opportunities are available to women in these urban markets. Studies have suggested that female migration is of much greater volume and complexity than was previously believed in Ghana (e.g., Ardayfio-Schandorf and Kwafo-Akoto 1990; Awumbila et al. 2011). There has been a southward migration of the relatively young female population from northern Ghana into southern cities like Accra, Kumasi, and Takoradi for the long term, the medium term, or sometimes the short term to engage in various activities of economic value (Anamzoya 2001). Closely associated with female migration is child migration (Ansah et al. 2017), where relatively young female migrants with children under five years old migrate from northern Ghana to urban markets in the south either seasonally or for a longer period to engage in economic activities.

Agbogbloshie is one of the most popular destinations for these female migrants from northern Ghana, popularly known as *Kayayei*.<sup>3</sup> It is a suburb in Accra, the most urbanized city in Ghana, one that hosts many migrant groups from all over Ghana as well as from across West Africa. The community, with a population of about 40,000 people (2010 Housing and Population Census; Ghana Statistical Service 2012), is a well-known dumping ground for electronic waste (e-waste) from Ghana and other nations, which causes a lot of air pollution (Ansah et al. 2017). Agbogbloshie is also the largest onion market in Ghana. According to Kropp-Dakubu (1997), Agbogbloshie was populated by internally displaced persons from the Konkomba-Nanumba war in Northern Ghana in the early 1980s. Since then, the space has become the main hub for Ghanaian migrants, particularly from the north. The market and the community overlap, making the boundaries between the two difficult to determine. The community is prone to fire outbreaks due to the makeshift wooden structures that serve as houses, as well as the haphazard nature of electrical wiring. Agbogbloshie is poorly demarcated, with no running water or sanitation facilities. It

is also known to be the hideout of criminals and prostitutes. Indeed, the community has been nicknamed Sodom and Gomorrah, perhaps in recognition of the harsh living conditions there (see Ansah et al. 2017 for a more detailed description of Agboghloshie).

Within this space, Kayayei live in makeshift compound houses in/around the market. According to Ansah et al. (2017), in some instances, Kayayei from the same ethnolinguistic groups live together in what may be loosely described as linguistic islands that are often in proximity to other linguistic islands of different ethnolinguistic groupings. In other instances, Kayayei from different ethnolinguistic groups are co-tenants in rented makeshift structures. In either case, it may be misleading to look at these living arrangements from an essentialist perspective and assume a clear-cut spatial and sociolinguistic homogeneity among these multilingual populations. This is because there is usually a gap between how people, languages, and places are represented and the actual practices of language use, identity assertion, and spatial occupation (Collins and Slembrouck 2005, 189).

To engage in economic activities in the market, the Kayayei send their children under five years old to privately owned preschool (childcare) facilities in/around the market/community. In Ghana, the official school age is four to five years. Consequently, preschool facilities are regulated not by the Ghana Education Service but by the Department of Social Welfare. Thus, we can expect that, while many of these facilities are organized like schools in several respects—like the enforcing of the wearing of uniforms—Ghana's language-in-education policy<sup>4</sup> is not applicable at these centers. This means that childcare facilities are at liberty to adopt their own localized language policies. Nevertheless, during the community entry interactions in this study, the heads of these facilities explained that the only criteria they require of teachers/carers were the ability to speak some English and a level of maturity in handling children. While child migrants spend the evenings and weekends with their families and neighbors in the market/community, they spend most of each working day with their peers and adults other than their parents at these centers.

Given the sociolinguistic situation of Agboghloshie as described above—the complexity of ethnolinguistic diversity and the unregulated use of language in spaces, particularly at childcare facilities—one might wonder what linguistic repertoires child migrant preschoolers develop from the communicative practices they are embedded in. In the traditional literature on language contact/language and migration (e.g., Adserà and Pytliková 2016; Lochmann, Rapoport, and Speciale 2019; Noorani, Baidak and Krémó 2019), this space may be considered potentially fertile for language shift and language loss among child migrants, particularly those from small language groups. However, recent literature on the topic (e.g., Blommaert 2010; Blommaert and Rampton 2011; Léglise and Gardiner 2017; Lüpke 2017; Mufwene 2008; Ndhlovu 2017) argues that migration actually leads to the development of more complex, heterogeneous language practices that result in complex linguistic diversity/super-diversities rather than a simple language shift.

Both Mufwene (2017) and Lüpke (2017) argue, citing Africa as an example, that in migratory contexts, small language groups coexist with languages of wider communication and that rather than abandoning their own languages for languages of wider communication (language shift and loss), members of small language groups become bi/multilingual in small languages and the languages of wider communication in their network. In a similar vein, Ansah et al. (2017) report that in three urban markets in Accra, including Agboghloshie, Kayayei negotiate linguistic challenges not by shifting from their first languages (L1s) but by developing minimal and specialized competence in Akan, the language of wider communication of these markets. That is, while Kayayei developed appropriate registers in Akan for business purposes in the markets—for example, for negotiating a fee and phatic communion for customer care—they used their L1s and other languages they know in their other sociolinguistic networks.

This article contributes to the discussion on the language and migration nexus by focusing on linguistic practices among child migrants in an African urban market. First, I discuss the literature on linguistic diversity and fluidity in migratory contexts. Next, I describe the methods of data collection, then present and discuss the data before finally concluding.

### Language and Migration

Migration is not an easy concept to define. While there appears to be a general consensus in the literature to suggest that migration refers to human movement from one place to another (Yaro et al. 2011), the required period and distance for a movement to be classified as such remains debatable. For instance, many reserve the term *migration* for human movement across national borders over a period of not less than six months and refer to movements within a nation/country, for example, rural-urban/countryside/city, as internal migration (Deshingkar 2005; Rees 2001). However one defines it, migration fundamentally involves a change in a spatial environment at the minimum. It involves leaving one's sociocultural, as well as linguistic, environment and adapting to new ones. Blommaert, Collins, and Slembrouck (2005, 198) observe that a change in spatial environment (e.g., migration) may affect "our capacity to deploy linguistic resources and skills and impose requirements on us we may fail to meet." In other words, linguistic capacities that were adequate in previous settings may become profoundly inadequate in the new settings of migrant populations (Collins and Slembrouck 2005). For instance, even though Dagbani is a dominant language and a language of wider communication in Northern Ghana, speakers of Dagbani in Agbogbloshie have to learn Akan to engage in many economic activities.

In both sociolinguistic and linguistic anthropological literature, migration has been linked to multilingualism and its related concepts. Some researchers have focused on concepts that describe the situation of language contact that migration brings as well as the language practices that emerge, for example, bi/multilingualism, code-switching/code-mixing, creolization. Other studies have focused on how language practices affect individual languages in contact. In this regard, concepts and notions such as language attrition, language shift, language loss/death, and language maintenance have been discussed. While traditional sociolinguistics studied these concepts mainly from an essentialist perspective—for example, by defining language shift as a situation in a language contact (multilingual) situation where a whole population (community) replaces their language with another language through lack of natural transmission and intergenerational use (language shift and loss), as shown in Barrena et al. (2007)—recent literature on the nexus between language and migration (e.g., Blommaert 2010; Léglise and Gardiner 2017; Ndhlovu 2017) argues that such perspectives do not adequately account for the complexity in linguistic and communicative practices that occur in the complex sociolinguistic contexts that migration creates.

For instance, Ndhlovu (2017) argues that traditional multilingual approaches to studying language and migration produce inadequate understandings of the actual relationship between language and migration because the dominant theoretical underpinnings of such approaches conceptualize multilingualism as the existence of multiple monolithic objects. Such approaches, according to Blommaert (2013, 18), "overlook the complexity of multilingualism on the ground." Similarly, in reacting to how these approaches treat the concept of language/speech community as a homogeneous entity, Collins and Slembrouck (2005, 190) opine that the concept of "community" is adequate only in describing "a construal that is put on the messy interplay of place making and communicative practice." They also find the traditional concept of "community" problematic because it cannot adequately account for the "nested disjunctures and hybridities" (189) that exist in multilingual

contexts, for example, the multiplicity of language practices that are observed in the field (see also Blommaert 2013; Léglise and Gardiner 2017; Ndhlovu 2017).

Like Ndhlovu (2017), Léglise and Gardiner (2017) submit that even though there exist known multiplicity and heterogeneous practices among populations in linguistically diverse contexts, traditional sociolinguistic approaches have assumed a monolingual/monolithic view of language to describe such heterogeneous practices as code-switching/code-mixing. Léglise and Gardiner argue that plurilingual populations such as migrants, who develop varied linguistic skills, resources, and repertoires, tend to have heterogeneous language practices that can be captured by language theories that center on Indigenous perspectives. Similarly, Blackledge, Creese, and Takhi (2013) call for language theories founded on Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia and rooted in the communication patterns of a heterogeneous speech community to adequately account for heterogeneous language practices that occur among linguistically diverse populations like migrants.

Traditional literature structures the debate on language practices in contact situations in terms of how dominant languages become killer languages that destroy smaller languages in their paths. In other words, speakers of smaller languages in migratory contexts are framed as abandoning their languages and shifting to dominant languages, leading to language loss among such groups. However, in the face of evidence from studies on migratory contexts where linguistic diversity is more complex, this position has recently been challenged. For instance, Mufwene (2001, 2008) discusses language contact using a modified version of Haugen's (1971) concept of language ecology, defined as the interactions between languages and their environment.

Mufwene (2008, 76) compares the interactions among languages in complex language contact situations to the interactions that occur among species in a biological ecosystem and argues that similar to the way factors within the natural ecosystem influence the evolution of biological species, "languages evolve at the mercy of the socioeconomic ecologies in which they are embedded." In other words, he argues that in linguistically diverse situations (language ecologies), such as those found in complex language contact situations, languages compete for vitality and that social and economic dynamics influence and determine which languages/language varieties eventually gain more vitality. Unlike the traditional position, which sees languages with higher vitality (dominant languages) as killer languages, Mufwene asserts that in language ecologies, speakers of languages with less vitality are motivated to make language choices that are conditioned by the socioeconomic dynamics of the space while negotiating their daily lives. This process, he argues, citing the African migratory context as an example, leads to the development of complex linguistic ecologies where multiple languages coexist and speakers develop what he calls fluid and adaptive communicative practices.

Lüpke (2017) describes Mufwene's approach as an inter- and transdisciplinary agenda that must rest on certain pillars, including investigating communicative practices in a meaningful geographical setting. This approach does not describe the coexistence of multiple monolingualisms in a given space. Instead, it describes a situation similar to Blommaert's (2010) concept of super-diversities, where extreme linguistic diversity in diverse neighborhoods could generate complex linguistic repertoires in which fragments of migrants' languages and lingua francas are combined. According to Blackledge, Creese, and Takhi (2013, 59), the term "super-diversity" has been coined to refer to the meshing and interweaving of diversities, in which not only "ethnicity" but other variables intersect and influence the highly differential composition, social location and trajectories of various immigrant groups in the twenty-first century.

From the foregoing, it is clear that critical research on language use and communicative practices in migratory contexts remains important to the study of linguistic diversity because it can broaden our horizon and reshape how we conceptualize language and linguistic diversity. This study is a contribution in this

effort because it describes how socioeconomic dynamics (in Agbogbloshie) motivate linguistically diverse populations (child caregivers and migrants) to make language choices that create heterogeneous linguistic repertoires and language practices among (child) migrants in urban Africa. It provides new data and fresh insights into “real heterogeneous language practices of real people in real life” in migratory contexts that create super-diversities (Ndhlovu 2017, 16).

### Methods

The study employs linguistic ethnographic methods as described in Copland and Creese (2015) and Shaw, Copland, and Snell (2015). Linguistic ethnography is an interpretive approach that studies local and immediate actions of actors from their point of view and considers how such interactions are embedded in wider social contexts and structures (Copland and Creese 2015; Creese 2010). The approach shares assumptions with anthropological linguistics as proposed in Hymes (1962) and Gumperz (1982), where linguistic and ethnographic methods are combined to investigate how social communicative processes operate in a range of settings and contexts (Shaw, Copland, and Snell 2015). In linguistic ethnography, methods of data collection and analysis include observation, interviews, recording, transcription, and description of observed interactions. This study uses an interpretive approach to understand local and immediate communicative practices of child migrants, their families, and preschool facilities in considering how such practices are embedded in wider Agbogbloshie market/community. Interactions involving selected child migrants were observed and recorded at childcare centers and migrant homes in Agbogbloshie. In addition, child caregivers/teachers and migrant parents were interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide. Both the recorded interviews and observed interactions were transcribed and translated for analysis.

### Research Team

Two female PhD (language) students were engaged to assist the researcher in collecting data. Given the sociolinguistic nature of Agbogbloshie, I put a premium on linguistic profile in selecting the research assistants. Table 1 summarizes the linguistic profile of the research team.

The linguistic repertoires of the research team were essential to ensuring a successful navigation during data collection and processing of the linguistic diversity in Agbogbloshie. For instance, while Akan was useful as an entry language, the longer, more detailed engagement—such as interviews (especially of the Kayeyei)—required multiple languages with a lot of code-switching. On the one hand, code-switching appeared to be a normal and unconscious practice among both interviewers and interviewees—a natural consequence of being bi/multilingual. On the other hand, code-switching was used as social capital to index to ingroup membership. While the interviewers in particular used it to foster trust and win the confidence of the interviewees, interviewees used it—especially from L1 to a language of wider communication—to signal that they are no strangers in the space.

**Table 1**  
Linguistic profile of research team

Researcher	Languages spoken					
Researcher	Akan (native)	English	Ga (receptive competence)			
Assistant 1	Akan (native)	English				
Assistant 2	Akan	English	Kasem (native)	Dagaare	Dagbani	Konkomba

### *Participants*

In all, there were ten participants whose communicative practices were observed in detail: three children (Abu, Hawa, and Fatima, three- to four-year-old child migrants), four Kayayei parents aged eighteen to thirty-five years, and three teachers/carers from the three selected preschool facilities.<sup>5</sup> Abu was born in the Northern Region and brought to Accra when he was about seven months old. He is about four years old now and speaks Dagbani—a dominant language in the market and Northern Ghana, as well as Akan (Twi) as his primary languages. His mother, a single mother, speaks Dagbani as her primary language and lives in a predominantly Dagbani-speaking section of the market. Hawa was also born in the Northern Region and was brought to Accra when she was about eight months old. She is about three years old now and speaks Dagbani and Akan (Twi) as her primary languages. Her mother speaks Dagbani as her primary language and very little Akan. However, she lives in a non-Dagbani-speaking part of the market. Fatima was also born in the Northern Region and was brought to Accra when she was about six months old. She is about four years old now and speaks Komba, Akan (Twi), English, Konkomba, and Dagbani, but it is difficult to tell what her primary language or languages are. She lives in a nonlinguistic island in the market with both parents, who are L1 speakers of Komba, a small/er language both in the market and Northern Ghana. The three child migrants exhibited different competencies in English.

Although none of the four parents knew their exact age, we could estimate their ages to range between eighteen and forty years. None of the four parents had any formal education and therefore have next to no competence in English. This is because English competence in Ghana is largely associated with formal education, even though more and more people are learning English informally from the media. Nevertheless, each was at least a bilingual in their L1 and one other Ghanaian language, mostly Akan (Twi) and/or Dagbani. While Abu's mother spoke Dagbani and fluent Akan (Twi), Hawa's mother spoke Dagbani with minimal proficiency in Twi, and Fatima's parents spoke Komba, Konkomba, and some (Akan) Twi. Consequently, for Abu's mother and Fatima's parents, the interviews were conducted mainly in Akan (Twi) or Dagbani, but every now and again there were switches between these two languages. For Hawa's mother, however, the interviews/interactions were in Dagbani, even though she occasionally switched to broken Akan to illustrate a point.

Finally, the three carers/teachers consisted of two females and a male between thirty and fifty years old. All were multilingual in their respective L1s: English and at least one other Ghanaian language. All three carers had had secondary-school-level education. Table 2 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the participants.

### *The Preschool Facilities*

The three preschool facilities (schools) that were visited for both observation and interviews were situated within the market/community.<sup>6</sup> As previously mentioned, preschool facilities in Ghana are not regulated by the Ghana Education Service, even though they tend to be organized like schools. For all intents and purposes, they may be regarded as formalized childcare facilities. The three preschool facilities were privately owned, one by a faith-based organization and the other two by private individuals. It is interesting to note that the conditions found in the preschools were not too different from the general conditions of the market/community as described above. The preschools were crowded, with no proper demarcations between the facilities and other spaces in the market/community. Indeed, some classrooms served multiple purposes, including a thoroughfare for hawkers and an entrance to public spaces such as community washrooms. Figures 1–3 show how classrooms at childcare centers in Agbogbloshie serve other purposes.

**Table 2**  
**Summary of participants**

Participant	Gender	Age	Languages used/spoken
Child migrant 1 (Abu)	Male	4 years	Dagbani, Akan (Twi), English
Child migrant 2 (Hawa)	Female	3 years	Dagbani, Twi, English
Child migrant 3 (Fatima)	Female	4years	Komba, Konkomba, Dagbani, Twi, English
Abu's mother	Female	30–40 years	Dagbani, Twi
Hawa's mother	Female	30–40 years	Dagbani, Twi
Fatima's mother	Female	20–30 years	Komba, Konkomba, Twi (minimal)
Fatima's father	Male	35–40 years	Komba, Konkomba, Twi
Abu's teacher/carer	Female	30–40 years	Dangme, Ga, Ewe, Twi, English, Konkomba, Dagbani (minimal)
Hawa's teacher/carer	Female	40–50 years	Twi, Ga, English, Dagbani, Konkomba (minimal)
Fatima's teacher/carer	Male	30–40 years	Twi, Ga, Hausa, English, Dagbani, Konkomba (minimal)



*Figure 1.* Classroom at a childcare center in Agboglobshie. I have permission from the parents and childcare facilities to publish pictures from the study. [This figure appears in color in the online issue.]

### **Data Collection**

In line with linguistic ethnography practices, non-participant-observation and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from the three preschool facilities and three homes where the child migrants lived. The research team made twelve visits



Figure 2. Left: Classroom at a childcare facility. Right: A Kayayo using a classroom as a thoroughfare. [This figure appears in color in the online issue.]



Figure 3. Classroom at childcare facility serving as a thoroughfare to a community bathroom in Agbogbloshie. [This figure appears in color in the online issue.]

within three months to the market/community. The first four visits were reconnaissance—to identify and establish a relationship with participants. The remaining eight visits were specific and usually prearranged with participants. Each center was visited four times, and each home was visited four times. Some of the home/school visits were done on the same day but at different times. We observed communicative practices in these spaces by purposefully, systematically, and selectively watching and listening to interactions between participants and others.

Our primary interest/focus was the language(s) that was/were used and how they were distributed during these interactions. Finally, we used an interview protocol in semi-structured interviews to ask teachers/carers and parents specific questions relating to their communicative practices as well as to elicit ethnolinguistic background information. While parents were observed and interviewed in their homes, teachers/carers were observed and interviewed at the childcare facilities where they worked, and the children were observed both at home and at the childcare facilities. The observation at the childcare centers focused on the language use and communicative practices in carer–pupil interactions, carer–peer interactions, child–carer interactions, and child–peer interactions. The observation of parents at home focused on language use and communicative practices in parent–child interactions, sibling–migrant child interactions, and migrant child–peer interactions.

The interviews were audio recorded while the observations were largely described in narratives because of high levels of noise at the research site. However, there were a few video recordings of classroom interactions. Again, while the observation notes were described directly in English, the interviews were held in Ghanaian languages, mainly Twi and Dagbani but also Konkomba. These were transcribed and then translated into English for use. Extracts of translated interviews are attached in the appendixes. Finally, the observations made from the data regarding linguistic repertoires and communicative practices in the homes and childcare facilities were described and explained using Mufwene's (2008) concept of linguistic ecology.

### Language Ecology in Child Migrant Homes

Both interview and observation data revealed that Abu lives with his single mother in a shop in a predominantly Dagbani-speaking area of the market/community. Abu was born in Yendi, Northern Region, and brought to Accra when he was about seven months old. He is now about four years old. His mother, who has had no formal education, is ethnically a Dagomba and speaks Dagbani as L1 but Twi as L2. Abu has two older siblings, who also live with them. During the home observation, Abu's mother was seen speaking mostly Dagbani with all her children, including Abu. However, while Abu was heard speaking Dagbani with his mother some of the time, he also spoke Twi and a bit of English at home, particularly with his older siblings, who attend school in the Agbogbloshie community and speak English and Akan in addition to Dagbani. Interestingly, Abu's mother was observed occasionally switching from Dagbani to Twi and back to Dagbani while interacting with her children at home, especially when her children consistently engaged her in Twi even when she spoke Dagbani. Finally, Abu was observed speaking (mixing them mainly) all three languages—Twi, Dagbani, and a bit of English—with his peers and friends in his neighborhood. Thus, we may conclude that Abu is immersed in a multilingual language environment at home: his mother is a bilingual, his older siblings are multilingual, and so are his peers in the neighborhood. At four, he already uses three languages at home.

Hawa lives with both parents, but the research team never met her father at home. According to her mother, Hawa was born in Tamale, the Northern Regional capital, and was brought to Accra when she was about eight months old. She is now about three years old. Even though Hawa's mother is also ethnic Dagomba and speaks Dagbani as L1, she does not live in a predominantly Dagbani-speaking area of the market. Like Abu's mother, Hawa's mother has other older children. Unlike Abu's

mother, however, Hawa's mother speaks very little Akan. During the observation, Hawa's mother usually spoke Dagbani to her children at home. However, even though Hawa and her older siblings understand and speak Dagbani, they were usually heard speaking Twi among themselves. During the interview, Hawa's mother revealed that she makes a conscious effort to ensure that Hawa acquires and uses Dagbani even in Accra. However, she admitted that she sometimes gets frustrated in the process because while her older children can speak Dagbani fluently, they choose to speak Twi, especially with Hawa. Consequently, even though Hawa understands Dagbani, she normally would not use it during interactions with her mother or siblings at home. Indeed, this was confirmed during the observation when in several instances the mother was compelled to switch from Dagbani to Twi because the children persistently responded to her or made their requests in Twi when she spoke Dagbani. A transcript of a conversation with Hawa's mother is presented in appendix B.

Hawa's mother also reported that while she is not able to sustain a Dagbani-only interaction with her children, her husband is able to initiate and sustain conversations with all his children (including Hawa) in just Dagbani, especially when other kinsmen are present. As a result, all the children, including Hawa, speak only Dagbani when their father is home. As Hawa interacted with her peers/friends in the neighborhood, we observed Hawa and her siblings speaking mainly Twi but also a bit of Dagbani and English. Thus, like Abu's home, we can say that the ecology of Hawa's home environment is multilingual. Hawa exhibits multilingual tendencies but with Twi dominance.

Finally, Fatima, who was also born in the Northern Region and brought to Accra at six months old, is about four years old and lives in a compound house with both parents and two older siblings at Agbogbloshie. Both parents are ethnic Likooni, a subgroup of the Konkomba whose language is called Komba, a northern language. Compared to Dagbani, Komba is a small/er language both in the market and in Northern Ghana. The parents speak Konkomba, Dagbani, and Twi in addition to Komba, even though the mother's Twi is very basic. During the interview, both parents claimed they and their children speak only Komba at home. At the interview, Fatima's father indicated that he was very particular about the language(s) his children learn and use in Agbogbloshie because he fears they will lose their Likooni identity if they do not learn to speak Komba.

During our observation, Fatima and her siblings spoke only Komba in their home, both with their parents and among themselves. However, during play with her peers in the neighborhood, Fatima spoke mainly Twi but would switch intermittently to Konkomba, Dagbani, and English. Thus, while Fatima's parents appear to be actively espousing a monolingual communicative practice in their family, because the linguistic ecosystem of their home/neighborhood/community is multilingual, Fatima and her siblings are building multilingual repertoires. Fatima's father is too aware of the fast-developing multilingual repertoires among his children and has hatched a plan to stop it from developing any further for fear of losing their native identity, as explained in the following excerpts from the interview:

QUESTION:

Does it bother you that your children speak Twi?

FATHER:

Yes. We're not at home to speak our language with them, and so they will learn other languages and forget our language, Komba. They will learn some other languages to the neglect of our language. Though my older son can speak our language, he sometimes struggles to express himself with appropriate vocabulary when speaking Komba.

QUESTION:

Do you intend to help your children speak your language fluently, and how?

FATHER:

Yes, currently, I have sent my older son to the village to do JHS [Junior High School]. Over there, the people do not speak Twi. He will soon forget the Twi and speak only our language.

Thus, the linguistic ecology in the homes of these three migrant children reveals not only a complex coexistence of multiple languages in Agboglobshie but also a system of fluid communicative practices among its populations that seem to promote the development of multilingual repertoires among child migrants in the market/community. This observation will be discussed in detail in the discussion section, but first we turn to the linguistic ecology at the childcare centers.

### Language Ecology in Childcare Centers at Agboglobshie

In keeping with the principle of anonymity and confidentiality, in this article schools/childcare centers and teachers/carers are referred to by the name of the child migrant identified with them. Abu's school is situated right in the Agboglobshie market. The language ecology of this facility may be described as plurilingual with Twi dominance. While we did not insist on knowing the total number of children in this facility, there were over forty children in Abu's class/group, and there were several such groups at the facility. Each group/class of children is assigned a main teacher/carer and an assistant. Abu's teacher is ethnic Ada and speaks Dangme as L1 but also speaks Twi, Ga, Ewe, and English fluently. She also exhibited minimum proficiency (command expressions and interrogatives) in Dagbani and Konkomba, which are spoken by many of the children in her class. During the observation, we noticed that, depending on the situation at hand, Abu's teacher would use Twi or English alone or in combination (code-switching/code-mixing) to interact with the children. However, she would use minimal Dagbani and Konkomba in the class. Later in the interview, she explained that her language practice is to help the children cope with the linguistic diversity at the facility. Abu's teacher exhibited a similar fluid communicative practice with other workers at the facility, albeit with Twi dominance.

Twi was observed to be the dominant language children in Abu's class used to make requests. During the interview, the teacher/carer confirmed Twi as the main language of interaction within the facility. However, she also said that English was used minimally from time to time. When asked how children whose primary languages are not spoken in the school are able to cope with the linguistic diversity, the teacher explained that she is compelled to use nonverbal language (gestures) to communicate with such children on their very basic needs such as wanting to use the washroom or drink water. She was quick to add, however, that monolingual children from non-Akan background who enroll in the school begin to speak Twi and some amount of English by the end of one term, which is usually between twelve and fourteen weeks. Thus, Abu had the same communicative practices at home and the childcare center; that is, he used Twi (mainly), a bit of Dagbani, and a bit of English with both his peers and teachers at the facility, just as he did at home.

Even though Hawa and her parents are Dagbani-speaking and live in a predominantly Dagbani-speaking part of the market, she attends a childcare center in the predominantly Konkomba-speaking section. Like Abu's center, the children come from diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds. Again, Akan (Twi) was observed to be the main language of interaction in this facility, even though English was also used sparingly. Twi was the primary language of interaction among the children and between the children and their teachers/carers. Hawa's teacher is ethnically Akan and speaks Twi as her primary language but is also fluent in Ga and English. She exhibited a minimal proficiency in Dagbani and Konkomba. As she explained in the interview, she picked up Dagbani and Konkomba from the community and from the children in her class. She used mainly Twi with the pupils, but she would mix and

switch from one language to another in a single interactive event. For instance, if she gave some information in English, she would quickly repeat it in Twi and another language and would repeat instructions in several of the languages available to her and the children.

While she was interacting with her work colleagues, however, we observed that Hawa's teacher spoke different languages with different colleagues depending on their relationship and shared Ghanaian language(s). However, she would usually not initiate conversations in Ga, Dagbani, or Konkomba. Finally, we observed that while she would typically use Ghanaian languages other than Akan only in response to requests or complaints made by the children in those languages, she did not insist on any particular language as the official language of interaction in the class/group. Instead, she would try to make meaning out of whatever the children said and also respond in their languages if she knew them. She also intimated that children who arrived at the facility without any Twi at all were able to understand and make basic requests in Twi after one term, citing Hawa as an example. Hawa's communicative practices were the same at home and at the childcare facility: she spoke Twi, Dagbani, and a bit of English with everyone (apart from her father).

There was no identifiable dominant ethnolinguistic group at the location of Fatima's school. Teachers were heard using multiple languages in interacting with each other and nonpupils. Fatima's teacher, who is ethnic Akan, speaks Twi as her primary language but is also fluent in Ga, Hausa, and English. He also claimed a little proficiency in Dagbani and Konkomba. Even though he used mainly Twi and English with the children, he was observed using the other languages he is familiar with but sparingly. We also observed that he complemented his spoken communication with a lot of nonverbal codes like gestures. During the interview, he explained that he uses gestures to communicate basic needs of the children whose languages he could not speak and who did not yet speak any of the languages he speaks. He was quick to add, however, that such children pick up Twi from their friends in school within a short time.

Unlike Abu and Hawa, Fatima used different sets of languages at school and home—she used only two (English and Twi) out of her five languages with both teachers and peers at the facility. While Fatima's language use appears different, a critical look at her language use at school reveals a similar pattern in her communicative practices at home and school. She appears to be triglossic—choosing and using different sets of languages from her linguistic repertoires in different contexts, that is, Komba only with family at home, Twi and English only with peers and teachers at school, and Konkomba, Dagbani, Twi, and English with peers at home.

While table 3 summarizes the language distribution and use at migrant homes and preschool facilities as observed, appendix C presents a transcribed classroom event that captures the fluid communicative practices at childcare centers in Agboghloshie.

## Discussion

The first notable observation is that linguistic diversity is quite high in Agboghloshie. Based on the above description of the home and school language ecologies at Agboghloshie, we can describe the market/community as a highly multilingual space, not just because it is populated by people from diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds but mainly because the languages of these ethnolinguistically diverse populations in the market/community coexist and become resources for framing interactions and communicative practices in that space. Multiple languages with different levels of linguistic vitality, for example, Akan, Dagbani, English, and Komba, coexist in Agboghloshie. The child migrants' parents, siblings, neighborhood peers, teachers/carers, and school peers were found to know and use multiple languages on a regular basis and in different contexts.

The second notable observation is that populations in Agboghloshie exhibited what Lüpke 2017 (e275) describes as “fluid and adaptive communicative practices”

**Table 3**  
**Language use and distribution among child migrants in Agbogbloshie**

Child migrant's name	Abu	Hawa	Fatima
Age	4 years	3 years	4 years
Sex	Male	Female	Female
Languages spoken by child	Dagbani, English, Twi	Dagbani, English, Twi	Komba, Konkomba, Dagbani, English, Twi
Child's language use with teacher at school	Twi, Dagbani, English	Twi, Dagbani, English	Twi, English
Child's language use with peers at school	Twi, Dagbani, English	Twi, Dagbani, and English	Twi, English
Child's language use with siblings at home	Dagbani, Twi, English (sparingly)	Dagbani and Twi	Komba
Child's language use with peers at home (during play)	Dagbani, Twi, English (sparingly)	Dagbani, Twi, English (sparingly)	Konkomba, Dagbani, Twi, English
Child's language use with parents at home	Dagbani, Twi	Dagbani, Twi	Komba

(see also Mufwene 2017). In both migrant homes and childcare centers, participants were heard using multiple languages (switching/mixing) in the same communicative event and also across different communicative events.

Third, child migrants who are immersed in this linguistically diverse community acquire additional linguistic competencies and develop linguistic repertoires and fluid communicative practices that are different from those of their parents. All three child migrants have more languages in their repertoires than their parents, and they are more fluid in their use of these languages than their parents. Again, child migrants have different primary languages from their parents. For example, while both Abu and Hawa speak Akan, Dagbani, and English as primary languages, their parents speak Dagbani as their primary language.

In addition, teachers/carers at childcare centers practice flexible language policies and create “safe spaces” for child migrants to develop heterogeneous language practices in migrant languages and dominant languages in the market community. Furthermore, some migrant languages in Agbogbloshie have gained more linguistic vitality and become languages of wider communication, even in migratory contexts. Finally, the multilingual repertoires and fluid communicative practices in Agbogbloshie enable migrants to develop more and new linguistic competencies—teachers, parents, and child migrants were observed adding to their linguistic repertoires.

The first two notable observations from our study—that multiple languages coexist in Agbogbloshie and that migrants have “fluid and adaptive communicative practices” (Lüpke 2017, e275) both in the migrant homes and childcare centers—confirm Mufwene’s position on language contact/migration and linguistic diversity (in the African context). They also reiterate Lüpke’s (2017, 6) argument that rather than being a threat to linguistic vitality and diversity, migration (the coexistence of small groups) on the African continent is directly associated with high linguistic diversity where small/er language speakers in migratory contexts become bi/multilingual in small languages and lingua francas. These arguments are also endorsed by the third observation—that child migrants acquire additional linguistic competencies and develop linguistic repertoires and fluid communicative practices that are different from those of their parents. As is evident from our data, all three child migrants who were brought to Agbogbloshie barely at the onset of language acquisition exhibited evidence of multilingual repertoires that include the (migrant) language of their parents and other languages of wider communication in the community, that is, Akan (Twi), Dagbani, and English.

The observation that child migrants develop different linguistic repertoires and communicative practices from those of their parents is particularly insightful because where traditional sociolinguistic/multilingual literature may see Abu's and Hawa's use of Akan as a primary language as a sign of language shift (where second-generation migrants move away from using their parents' L1), this study shows that although Akan is used as their primary language, Dagbani (their parents' L1) remains part of the child migrants' linguistic profile. Indeed, the choice of Akan as a primary language among migrant children appears to be influenced by the social dynamics in Agbogbloshie rather than a lack of transgenerational transmission of Dagbani.

The choice of Akan as primary language by child migrants both at home and at the childcare centers may be interpreted as illustrating Bourdieu's (1982) argument (as cited in Grin, Sfreddo, and Vaillancourt 2010) about actors employing language in the production and reproduction of social structures, for example, to index sociocultural, political, and economic inequality or distance. Akan is believed to be the most widely used Ghanaian language in the country, as suggested by Ansah et al. (2017). Even though Ghana has no official national language policy, Akan has assumed the status of the *de facto* national language in Ghana. It is spoken by about 49 percent of the population as a native language and by about 40 percent as L2 (Ghana Statistical Service 2012). In addition, it is the language of trade and commerce in the large informal sector as well as on private radio and TV. In other words, Akan has a socioeconomic power in Ghana that makes it a language of choice by many for economic reasons. Thus, the choice of Akan as a primary language among child migrants may be motivated by the social and economic dynamics of not just Agbogbloshie but Ghana generally.

This observation that child migrants develop linguistic repertoires and communicative practices that are different from those of their parents resonates with Lüpke's (2013) finding (from Senegal) that the languages spoken by parents are not sufficient to explain the language repertoires of their (migrant) children. Lüpke (2013) identifies mobility and migration and language acquisition in peer group and age classes, among others, as practices that nurture multilingualism in Senegal and many other African countries.

The observation that Dagbani and, to some extent, Konkomba both appear to be attaining linguistic vitality in the community even though they are migrant languages in Agbogbloshie is indeed notable. While the literature on language and migration suggests that migrant languages tend to be small/er languages in their host communities, our data reveals that non-Dagbani/Konkomba-speaking migrants, for example, child migrant carers, are acquiring Dagbani and Konkomba as L2 speakers. For instance, Fatima as well as all three teachers/carers who were non-ethnic Dagomba/Konkomba exhibited some competence in the two languages, creating more linguistic diversity among migrant populations. Even though Dagbani is a dominant language in Northern Ghana, it is not generally a language of wider communication in the south. Nevertheless, it has become a dominant language in Agbogbloshie, probably because there are more Dagbani-speaking migrants in Agbogbloshie than other migrants. In this regard, linguistic vitality may be driven more by social factors such as population size than by the location where a language is used. Even though Konkomba may not have as many speakers as Dagbani in the entire Agbogbloshie market/community, Fatima is picking up Konkomba from school because it is commonly used there. This means linguistic vitality may depend on the functions to which a language is put.

It is notable that teachers/carers in all three childcare centers practiced very flexible local language policies even in the face of a national language-in-education policy. This raises questions of social and sociolinguistic reproduction. Even though childcare centers are not recognized as schools, and therefore are not regulated by the Ghana Education Service, they operate like schools in some ways, for example, wearing of uniforms, grouping children into classes with a "teacher," and the structure of "school days." Nevertheless, none of the centers we observed

implemented the country's language-in-education policy, which mandates schools to use one of nine selected Ghanaian languages and/or English as a school language before class four. If they had been implementing this policy, all three facilities would have used Ga and/or English as the main language(s). Ghana's language-in-education policies over the years have given English—a colonial legacy—a central place and pushed indigenous Ghanaian languages to the fringes in education (Ansah 2014; Anyidoho 2018; Owu-Ewie 2006). While some may situate this situation in postcolonial discourses, it may also well reflect the current position of English as a global language (Crystal 1997).

Teachers/carers in these centers who were themselves highly multilingual, with varying competencies in a number of Ghanaian languages and English, adopted very flexible practiced language policies with fluid communicative practices, albeit with Twi dominance. It is these teachers/carers and not parents who have begun to respond to the sociolinguistic disposition of child migrants, even in the face of a national language-in-education policy. Apart from not forbidding child migrants from speaking any particular language, the teachers themselves were adding to their own linguistic repertoires—developing competence in the languages of the child migrants to meet their linguistic needs. This observation is notable because we may link the communicative practices in these facilities to Mary and Young's (2017) concept of "practiced language policies," which they define as the daily use of language(s) by a teacher in the classroom and their recognition of how such language practices impact the classroom and school generally (see also Bonicina-Pugh 2012).

Thus, the teachers' practiced language policies, together with their communicative practices in these facilities, create what Mary and Young (2017) describe as "safe spaces" for child migrants in Agbogbloshie not only to transition from their home language(s) to the school language(s) but also to develop multilingual repertoires and heterogeneous communicative practices. Another phenomenon that appears to nurture multilingualism in Agbogbloshie in particular, and Ghana in general, is compound housing—where different families from different ethnolinguistic backgrounds share a single compound/housing unit and raise their children side by side. For instance, the only time Fatima uses four out of her five languages is when she is with her peers at home, which is a compound house.

Finally, the observation that the heterogeneous linguistic repertoires and fluid communicative practices observed in Agbogbloshie encourage and build more complex linguistic diversity in the space may be linked to Mufwene's (2017) and Lüpke's (2017) argument that, in the African context at least, migration and language contact may actually be associated with complex linguistic diversity.

## Conclusion

This article employs ethnographic methods to investigate the communicative practices that shape the linguistic repertoires that child migrants (preschoolers) develop from the communicative practices they are immersed in both at home and at childcare centers in Agbogbloshie. The study reveals that child migrants are immersed in a community where multiple languages with different linguistic vitality coexist and where populations exhibit heterogeneous/fluid and adaptive communicative practices. Child carers in Agbogbloshie adopt flexible language policies that create enabling environments for child migrants to develop heterogeneous/fluid adaptive communicative practices, which lead to the development of complex multilingual repertoires among child migrants. While the linguistic repertoires of child migrants differ from those of their parents, they usually include the primary languages of their parents and other languages of wider communication. It is also observed that these heterogeneous linguistic repertoires and practices create complex linguistically diverse situations and an opportunity for more complex multilingual repertoires and practices to the extent that some migrant languages attain linguistic vitality in a host community.

The observations noted in this study may be related to Blommaert, Collins, and Slembrouck's (2005, 197) argument that "multilingualism is not what individuals have or don't have, but what the environment, as structured determinations and interactional emergence, enables and disables." Child migrants in Agbogbloshie do not simply have multilingual abilities. Instead, they have developed/are developing additional linguistic competencies and multilingual repertoires because of the environment they are immersed in. Thus, our description of Agbogbloshie as a highly multilingual space is based not on the simple reason that it is populated by people from diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds but because these ethnolinguistically diverse populations in the space create and adopt fluid and adaptive communicative practices that create bi/multilingual speakers in that space.

This study thus contributes to the current research position that suggests that migration may contribute to linguistic vitality and diversity (in the African context). It also contributes to Indigenous perspectives and perceptions on linguistic diversity as well as our understanding of the structure and nature of super-diversification in urban Africa as suggested by researchers including Blommaert (2010, 2013), Léglise and Gardiner (2017), Lüpke (2017), Mufwene (2008), and Ndhlovu (2017).

### Notes

1. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA 2017) and UNICEF (2018) define child migrants as children who live in a country (or city) other than where they were born (with or without their parents).

2. A compound house is a housing system in Ghana where different families, usually from different ethnolinguistic backgrounds, live in different sections/rooms of the same house and share common facilities, for example, toilet, bathroom, kitchen, and electricity meter.

3. *Kayayei*, also known as head porters in the literature on Ghanaian migration (Ahlvin 2012)), are female migrants, typically from Northern Ghana, who carry people's loads on their heads for a fee in urban markets.

4. The current language-in-education policy states that the child's L1 (and English where possible) be used as the medium of instruction for lower primary school (KG–P3) and English be taught as a subject. However, English becomes the medium of instruction from P4 while the child's L1 becomes a taught subject from this level.

5. These names are pseudonyms.

6. Many people in Agbogbloshie have trust issues, so the schools have been anonymized to ensure privacy and confidentiality.

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## Appendix A

### Sample (Translated) Transcript of Interview with Fatima's Migrant Parents

QUESTION:

How often are you at home during the day?

FATHER:

We're both Kayayei (head porters), and so we leave the house very early each morning. My wife sometimes leaves before me.

MOTHER:

I'm always on the move. I don't get to stay at home with my children.

QUESTION:

But why are you home today?

FATHER:

It is because of the rain. When it rains, the whole market becomes messy. We will go later in the day.

QUESTION:

You speak Twi. Where did you learn it from?

FATHER:

I learned it from northern Kpandai. I used to live there. My wife does not speak good Twi. She is now learning the language.

QUESTION:

Do you speak Twi with your children?

FATHER:

No. But they speak Twi with their friends and some of the people in the house.

MOTHER:

I don't speak Twi with them. I have a challenge in Twi. I'm not fluent in Twi.

QUESTION:

Does it bother you that your children speak Twi?

FATHER:

Yes. We're not at home to speak our language with them, and so they will learn other languages and forget our language, Komba. They will learn some other languages to the neglect of our language. Though my older son can speak our language, he sometimes struggles to express himself with appropriate vocabulary when speaking Komba.

QUESTION:

Do you intend to help your children to speak your language fluently, and how?

FATHER:

Yes, currently, I have sent my older son to the village to do JHS. Over there the people do not speak Twi. He will soon forget the Twi and speak only our language.

## Appendix B

**Sample (Translated) Transcript of Interview with (Abu's) Migrant Mother**  
**Background:** This interview was conducted in a market stall that doubles as a home for the participant's family. The recording began after some interaction had already taken place and consent given. The interview was conducted mainly in Dagbani.

QUESTION:

How is your family doing?

MOTHER:

As I sit here now, I do everything on my own. I have a husband, but he's not helping me. As I sit, I have five children. I pay for everything. I pay for the one who goes to SSS [senior high school]. ... It is like I don't have a husband.

(Pauses)

MOTHER:

I have one child at home [place of origin] who is not schooling. One of them [the children] has to stay at home [*Laughter*]

INTERVIEWER:

I understand. But now that you're telling me this, then I will let the police come after you. [*Laughter from both*]

QUESTION:

What language(s) do you use at home with your children?

MOTHER:

I speak my homeland language [Dagbani] with them. They sometimes speak Twi among themselves, and sometimes the older one who is in school tries to speak English. She brings English home and sometimes tries to teach the small one that I have now at home. I like it when they try to speak English. It is interesting when I see that. I don't understand it—it is small English that they try. [*Laughs*]

QUESTION:

Do you speak Ga with them?

MOTHER:

I don't. I don't speak Ga with them. I don't understand it, how will I speak it with them?

QUESTION:

You said earlier that when you're pregnant, you go back home [Tamale] to give birth when you are due. This one—at what age did you return with her?

MOTHER:

About five or eight months, like that.

QUESTION:

You said they speak Twi. How do they learn the language?

MOTHER:

Yes, they speak and they learn it very fast.

QUESTION:

How are they able to learn it?

MOTHER:

[Sighs] They pick it from the community and when they go to school. It's their friends, oo. When they play with other children. In this town [Accra] when you go to buy something, you say, "I'm buying something, how much is it?" [Says it in Twi with Dagbani accent. Laughter] The way they learn it is still surprising to me. I don't know how they do it. When they are speaking, I only hear a little and I just watch them.

QUESTION:

What languages do you speak?

MOTHER:

It's Dagbani that I speak.

QUESTION:

What about Ga and Twi?

MOTHER:

I don't understand any other language.

QUESTION:

What about the northern languages?

MOTHER:

It's only Dagbani. I speak Twi that can help me respond to customers when I go to carry load [Kayayie]. [Laughs]

QUESTION:

How do you feel when they speak Twi at home?

MOTHER:

I don't mind, because as we find ourselves here, it is Twi that is spoken everywhere, and when you want to buy something you must speak Twi. It's not an issue when they speak and it's even only here. It's here that they speak Twi. When we get to our hometown they will soon forget it. Who will they speak it with? Me? [Laughs] They will soon forget when we get home. Rather the English will remain because they will attend school over there. The Twi will vanish.

QUESTION:

How will the Twi vanish?

MOTHER:

It's the compound, the community, the whole house. No one will speak it with them because me, I won't speak it with them. [Laughs]

### Appendix C

**Sample (Translated) Transcript of a Classroom Event in (Abu's) School**  
**Background:** The research assistants donated some basic teaching and learning materials to Abu's school. They offered to help the carers post the material on the classroom walls while they observed the classroom situation. Teacher A is Ada and speaks Ada. She also speaks Twi, Ga, and Ewe with very little proficiency. She has learned a few sentences in Dagbani and Konkomba to be able to ask the child basic questions, such as if they need something, and also a few command words to be able to call the child or the class to order when necessary. She uses Twi, English, and some Dagbani and Konkomba in the classroom depending on the situation.

Two children are crying.

TEACHER to class: Keep quiet. Keep quiet. Sit down. Keep quiet. [English]

TEACHER to first crying child: Why are you crying? Come. [Twi]

First child only points in the direction of the other crying child.

TEACHER to second child: And why are you also crying? [in Twi]

Second child also points at the first crying child.

TEACHER to second child: Don't cry again. Stop, okay? [Twi]

TEACHER to first crying child: Come. [Twi] Sit down. [English]

FIRST crying child: I want some. [Twi] [*Pointing at the posters that were being posted*]

TEACHER to the class: Sit down, keep quiet. [Twi]