

Transacting and Negotiating Through Translanguaging in Bilingual Economic Contexts: Non-Observance of Linguistic Repertoire in Mtukudzi's 'Madam Let's Talk'

Raphael Nhongo

Department of Arts, Walter Sisulu University, Mthatha, South Africa

Abstract—Translanguaging has always existed as a communication-facilitating practice in bilingual and multilingual contexts where speakers have different first languages (L1) but are not proficient in each other's language. The discussion focuses on a critical discourse analysis of the concept of translanguaging in practical language use, as reflected in Oliver Mtukudzi's song 'Madam Let's Talk'. Translanguaging has become a popular topic in the study of language practices in multilingual educational contexts, but critical discourse analysis of translanguaging outside the classroom is rare. In Mtukudzi's song, the message is encoded in English, yet the primary voice conveying the message predominantly uses the Shona language. The emerging language stemming from translanguaging is different from the 'named languages' involved in the message, which are Shona and English. A critical discourse analysis of Mtukudzi's song reveals that, in bilingual contexts when negotiating business, the customer's language takes precedence. Even if the seller is not so proficient in the prospective buyer's language, translanguaging is employed as a strategy for scaffolding communication. The translanguaging in Mtukudzi's song reflects the power dynamics arising from the economic standing of participants in a conversation taking within a bilingual context. The contextual use of English and Shona in the song also demonstrates that the coexistence of languages does not imply status. The language spoken as L1 by those with higher social and economic standing will occupy a more prestigious position.

Index Terms—emerging language, multilingual context, named languages, Shona-English bilingual, translanguaging

I. INTRODUCTION

Studies about translanguaging have mostly been theoretical, focusing particularly on proposed and envisioned language practices in multilingual and bilingual educational contexts. It has been noted that although translanguaging has evolved as a pedagogic strategy, it has long been a common communication practice in bilingual and multilingual contexts around the world (Too, 2023). Translanguaging is now recommended as one of the best instructional strategies to be adopted in bilingual and multilingual educational contexts. However, this paper diverges from antecedent studies in two ways. Firstly, it does not view translanguaging as a theory but as a practice by a bilingual speaker in a real-life practical communication situation. Secondly, the study examines how a bilingual speaker conveys a message to someone who uses a different language, with this language practice being performed in a song. The ideas advanced are hinged on a critical discourse analysis of translanguaging in Oliver Mtukudzi's song, 'Madam Let's Talk'. To understand the application of translanguaging in Oliver Mtukudzi's song, critical discourse analysis is used as both a theoretical framework and a methodology. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a mode of inquiry where both theory and methodology are linked (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 2010; Fairclough et al., 2011). Applying CDA to study translanguaging in the context of its practical functionality will help in understanding this language practice beyond its general perception as a pedagogical theory.

It has been observed that communication between human beings will always take place even if they do not share the same language. Communication is part of human life and because language is not biologically inherited like other instincts such as crying and laughing, translanguaging would emerge as a new language practice where people do not share a common language. Garcia and Wei (2014) note that translanguaging does not entail "two separate languages, nor to a synthesis of different language practices, nor to a hybrid mixture" (p. 40), but rather "new language practices that make visible the complexity of language exchanges among people with different histories" (Makoe, 2018, p. 17). On the other hand, Canagarajah (2011) argues that it is "the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system" (p. 40). A detailed discussion on translanguaging is contained in the next section.

Works of art, particularly music, reflect societies in a dual way, that is, through the message conveyed in the song and the reflection of language practices within a society. English, an ex-colonial language in Zimbabwe, has become a

language of wider communication, encompassing a broad range of formal sectors such as commerce, education, the judiciary and the media. English is the second language (L2) for the majority of Zimbabweans. The first language (L1) speakers of English in Zimbabwe are associated with wealth and prestige, and the majority of these individuals are of European descent, commonly referred to as ‘whites’. The vendors target the L1 speakers of English when they sell their goods along the pavements outside the shops in the central business district. When the L2 speakers are selling their goods to the L1 speakers of English, they have no choice but to use English to ensure that they are understood by their customers. It is a common view among Zimbabweans that vendors are individuals who did not perform well in school and the occupation is seen as a last resort. This implies that most vendors are not so proficient in English as their L2, and this study aims to analyse how they communicate. In the song, ‘Madam Let’s Talk’, Oliver Mtukudzi adopts the persona of a Shona-speaking woman who sells home-made fabric. This woman is soliciting a purchase from a ‘white’ lady. The paper thus conducts a critical discourse analysis of the language used by this female vendor character created by Mtukudzi.

II. TRANSLANGUAGING IN EDUCATION AND IN GENERAL DISCOURSES

Research on translanguaging has primarily concentrated on language use in educational settings, with relatively little attention paid to everyday, general discourse. While translanguaging has been viewed as a language practice, it has also been conceptualised as a theory aimed at enhancing teaching and learning in multilingual contexts. Other researchers have viewed translanguaging as an instructional strategy that can enhance learners’ performance and appreciation of subjects like science and mathematics among English L2 speakers. Studies exploring translanguaging as an instructional approach in education have often been overly theoretical, with limited focus on the actual language practices in favour of conceptualised ones. This paper, however, focuses on the concrete practice of translanguaging in everyday speech, utilising Oliver Mtukudzi’s song ‘Madam Let’s Talk’ as a case study. According to Poza (2017), translanguaging is not new, even though the dramatic popularisation of the term is recent. Ideas of translanguaging as a language practice have long been studied and documented, particularly in the context of social life where societal multilingualism is more common (Poza, 2017). The arguments advanced in the paper are guided by Poza’s observation that translanguaging is a practice that is utilised in everyday social life in multilingual contexts.

Translanguaging is conceptualised as both a pedagogical approach to supporting multilingual learners and a critical lens through which to challenge traditional, monolingual perspectives that have marginalised specific language communities (Garcia, 2009). Translanguaging is a bilingual or multilingual approach that focuses on the dynamic practices of language users rather than on individual languages as discrete entities (Poza, 2017). Translanguaging allows bi/multilinguals to converse freely between named languages with the goal of meeting their communicative needs (Adhikari & Proudell, 2023). Perspectives about translanguaging challenge entrenched ideologies that prioritise monolingualism and the native speaker model in human communication (Cook, 1999; Grosjean, 2010). Translanguaging encompasses the full spectrum of linguistic behaviours employed by multilingual speakers, extending beyond structural combinations, code-switching, information exchange, to encompass the construction of identity, values, and social relationships (Wei, 2011). Given translanguaging’s capacity to enable bilinguals or multilinguals to shuttle fluidly between named languages, it is essential to examine how the Shona L1 speaker in Oliver Mtukudzi’s song conveys the message in English, her L2 where proficiency is limited.

Translanguaging is a dynamic process whereby individuals harness their linguistic repertoire to construct meaning, shape experiences, and acquire knowledge across languages (Baker, 2011). It involves the seamless integration of multiple languages to facilitate cognitive processes such as comprehension, expression, literacy, and learning (Lewis et al., 2012). This systematic combination of languages within a communicative context (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011) challenges traditional views of bilingualism as separate linguistic systems. Translanguaging recognises the bilingual as a competent language user who strategically selects from a unified linguistic repertoire to achieve communicative goals. Rather than focusing on monolingual norms, translanguaging centres on the actual language practices of bilingual individuals described as ‘named languages’ (Celic & Seltzer, 2011). Translanguaging challenges the idea that a bilingual thinks in a named language because bilinguals develop as agentive members through their experience with languages that they are exposed to (Carvajal-Redigor & Mortenson, 2023). However, contrary to Carvajal-Redigor and Mortenson (2023), the analysis of discursive practices in Mtukudzi’s work will demonstrate that the speaker is thinking in Shona, their L1, while communicating in English, their L2. This paper emphasises that translanguaging, before its formal adoption as a pedagogical strategy, has always been a fundamental tool for scaffolding communication in bilingual and multilingual practical language contexts. As a language practice, translanguaging reconceptualises bilingualism as a dynamic process, challenging the notion of separate, autonomous language systems. It emphasises the flexible and creative ways bilingual individuals select and deploy linguistic resources to communicate effectively (Velasco & Garcia, 2014, p. 7).

Translanguaging is distinct from structural linguistic concepts such as code-switching, code-mixing, crossing, or hybridisation, which involve the combination of closed linguistic systems to produce a new ‘hybrid’ language (Mazzaferro, 2018). Unlike code-switching, which focuses on strategic alternation between discrete languages based on contextual factors, translanguaging emphasises the creative and generative use of a single, unified linguistic repertoire (Wei, 2011). In contrast to the concept of code-switching as the movement between separate languages (Hornberger &

Link, 2012), translanguaging transcends linguistic boundaries, focusing on the dynamic language practices of individuals. Garcia (2009) says that translanguaging contains but goes beyond code-switching. Translanguaging is not going between linguistic systems but transcending them (Mazzaferro, 2018). While some scholars advocate for a paradigm shift that recognizes and normalises the diverse language practices of multilinguals, challenging monolingual ideologies, others have interpreted translanguaging as simply a repackaging of the concept of code-switching (Poza, 2017). However, it is clear from the preceding definitions that code-switching cannot be purely equated to translanguaging.

The bulk of research on translanguaging is focussed on education. Creese and Blackledge (2010) argue that monolingual instructional approaches in educating bilingual children should be repudiated for the adoption of bilingual instructional strategies in the form of translanguaging. Creese and Blackledge (2010) raised this argument when they were describing a flexible instruction in Chinese and Gujarati community language schools in the United Kingdom. Palmer et al. (2014) explored approaches to teaching in a bilingual context in Texas and concluded that by adopting translanguaging, teachers move towards using students' bilingual language practices as a resource for academic instruction. Sayer (2013) concluded that the teachers' adoption of a flexible bilingual pedagogy allows for translanguaging in the classroom not only as way of making sense of content and learning language, but also as a legitimised means of performing desired identities. Sayer's (2013) perspective is informed by a study examining how bilingual teachers and children utilised their home language to mediate academic content and standard languages among second-grade learners in a well-established Mexican American community in San Antonio. Similarly, Caldas (2019) examined the language ideology shifts of 20 Mexican American preservice bilingual teachers within a translanguaging space where all the research participants agreed that there were cognitive benefits in using this approach.

Liu (2020) examined the processes and patterning of translanguaging and trans-semiotising in facilitating Content and Integrated Language Learning (CLIL) in Cantonese-English bilingual classroom contexts. Liu (2020) suggested that translanguaging should be incorporated in multilingual CLIL classrooms as planned systematic scaffolding. Sun and Lan (2020) revealed that translanguaging goes beyond just speaking and can also be noticed in writing. They argued that translanguaging has significant influence on writing and pedagogy. Cenoz and Gorter (2020) argue that isolating languages within academic instruction can be detrimental, as it hinders students from leveraging linguistic resources acquired across different languages.

Research on translanguaging in education has mainly focused on language teaching more than on subject content. Makalela (2015) investigated the efficacy of alternating input and output languages within the same lessons to offset linguistic fixity prevalent in monolingual classrooms. The study findings revealed that multilingual learners derive cognitive and social benefits from employing multiple languages in classroom settings. Wildsmith-Cromarty (2018) investigated the impact of employing both isiZulu and English as languages of instruction on the learning and performance of third-year BA students pursuing a language teaching career in a course focused on teaching isiZulu as an additional language. The findings revealed that what began as planned and systematic code-switching ended up becoming translanguaging (Wildsmith-Cromarty, 2018). Mbiriri-Hungwe and Hungwe (2018) investigated translanguaging practices in a second-year computer science class at a South African university. Their findings revealed that students perceived translanguaging as a valuable learning tool and recommended its broader adoption across the faculty.

Ngcobo (2018) reported on a study that aimed to enhance summary writing abilities among first-year students by leveraging their L1 and L2, informed by translanguaging theory. Nhongo and Tshotsho (2019) advocated for translanguaging as a valuable instructional method in science and mathematics education, emphasising it as a complementary approach rather than a replacement for English with African languages. Hungwe (2019) demonstrated how paraphrasing can be integrated with a translingual approach to explicitly teach students reading and comprehension skills. The study findings offered insights into utilizing translanguaging to facilitate multilingual students' text comprehension through paraphrasing (Hungwe, 2019). The extant literature reveals a predominant focus on translanguaging within educational contexts. This study departs from this trend by examining the practical application of translanguaging in everyday speech, as exemplified by Oliver Mtukudzi's music. By analysing translanguaging as a discourse practice in communicative situations, this paper aims to contrast it with the often idealized and theorized representations of language use in bilingual educational settings.

A growing number of researchers have expanded the scope of translanguaging beyond its traditional focus as a pedagogical strategy in multilingual contexts. These scholars have demonstrated the applicability of translanguaging to everyday discourse, trade, and various domains of popular culture. Wei (2018) observes that translanguaging has been employed across pedagogy, everyday social interactions, cross-modal and multimodal communication, linguistic landscapes, visual arts, music, and transgender discourse. Mazzaferro (2018) characterises translanguaging as a practice or activity involving the strategic deployment of linguistic and semiotic resources in everyday life. Sibanda (2020) examined language use within two Zimbabwean theatre groups, critically analysing the political, social, ideological, and cultural meanings embedded in their theatrical language. The performances challenged and redefined the dominance of English and Shona through code-switching, translanguaging, and language mixing. Wei (2016) investigated the language practices of Chinese English users, concluding that the emergent language exhibited characteristics of both English and Chinese, warranting the label *Chinglish*.

Makalela (2013) examined the linguistic practices of Black township residents who identify with *kasi-taal*, a hybrid urban language variety from Johannesburg. The study found that traditional linguistic boundaries between indigenous African languages have been redefined to accommodate new expressions of identity. This linguistic expansion is facilitated by shared linguistic substrates, lexical borrowing, semantic shifts, and morphological adaptations from Afrikaans and English. Employing a translanguaging framework, Makalela (2013) argues that *kasi-taal* challenges conventional language categorisations and offers potential pathways for the convergence of African languages. While Makalela's research diverged from the typical focus on translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy, the study participants were still situated within an educational context as second-year university students. Given the paucity of research on translanguaging outside of educational settings, this study adopts a novel approach by examining translanguaging in the discourse of Shona-English bilingual vendors.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study employs critical discourse analysis within a broader qualitative research design. This study identifies and analyses instances of translanguaging in Oliver Mtukudzi's song, 'Madam Let's Talk', through the lens of critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA is a "problem-oriented interdisciplinary research movement, subsuming a variety of approaches, each with different theoretical models, research methods and agenda" (Fairclough et al., 2011, p. 357). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a qualitative research approach that examines how language is used to construct, maintain, and legitimise social inequalities (Mullet, 2018). The speaker in the song demonstrates limited conversational and negotiating power, highlighting the importance of critical discourse analysis (CDA) in examining the intricacies of translanguaging within Mtukudzi's lyrics. It is important to note that CDA generally argues that social practice and linguistic practice are dependent on one another as they seek to establish how societal power relations are exhibited through language use. This study employs CDA to illustrate how translanguaging is influenced by the power dynamics between English L2-speaking vendors and English L1-speaking potential buyers. CDA is a mode of inquiry where theory and methodology are inherently linked to one another (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 2010). According to Fairclough (2005), CDA focuses on four aspects of research which are the emergence, hegemony, recontextualisation, and operationalisation of discourses.

CDA assumes that language use is intentional, whether consciously or unconsciously driven (Mullet, 2018). The aim of the paper is to demonstrate that a unique type of discourse emerges through an 'unnamed language' that emerges through translanguaging as a Shona-English bilingual, who is not so proficient in English, is communicating with an English L1 speaker. Hegemony, a central concept in CDA, is evident in the vendor's strategic language choice, targeting the customer's L1 (English) despite the vendor's own L1 being Shona. This linguistic accommodation reflects the power imbalance between the two parties. The resulting discourse is a unique hybrid, recontextualised through translanguaging and defying traditional linguistic norms. This 'unnamed language' becomes a shared communicative tool for both Shona-speaking vendors and English-speaking customers within the vending context. While Mtukudzi's song provides a specific example, it can be generalised to represent the linguistic practices of many Shona-English bilingual vendors with limited English proficiency.

IV. A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF TRANSLANGUAGING IN MTUKUDZI'S SONG

Oliver Mtukudzi's song, 'Madam Let's Talk', from the album *Tsivo* was released in 2003. The renowned Zimbabwean singer, who passed away in 2019 at the age of 66, gained international acclaim for his music. In the song, Oliver Mtukudzi adopts the persona of a woman who sells home-made fabric. The home-made fabric is called *dhoini* in Shona, an indigenous language with the highest number of speakers in Zimbabwe. These home-made fabrics are used as tablecloth, bed linen, seat covers, for decorating in the house and as place mats. They are made from knitting thread and making them requires artistic skills. In Oliver Mtukudzi's song, a female vendor persuades a 'white' lady to purchase her homemade fabrics. While the theme in Oliver Mtukudzi's song is about a woman who is a vendor and is selling home-made fabric, the most interesting feature of the song is in language use. The vendor is an L1 Shona speaker but is using English, her L2 in trying to persuade an L1 speaker of English to buy her products. Given musicians' role as societal observers, this linguistic practice is generalised in this paper to represent the language use of Shona-speaking vendors interacting with English-speaking customers. The full text song is attached at the end of this paper as an appendix.

A critical discourse analysis of Oliver Mtukudzi's song, 'Madam Let's Talk', reveals translanguaging as a novel discourse form emerging from imbalanced power dynamics between the vendor and the customer during negotiation. The imbalanced power dynamic in the negotiation, with the customer holding greater conversational power due to higher socioeconomic status, compels the vendor to resort to English, their second language. Despite limited proficiency in the customer's language, the vendor is compelled to adopt a translanguaging approach, incorporating elements of the customer's L1. This linguistic strategy, as defined by Wei (2018), enables language users to bridge social divides previously maintained by distinct linguistic practices. While the customer and vendor possess distinct first languages, the vendor employs English, the customer's first language, in their interaction. Due to the vendor's limited English proficiency, the resulting discourse is infused with Shona conversational norms. Consequently, an L1

Shona speaker without English knowledge and an L1 English speaker unfamiliar with the sociolinguistic context would find the vendor's language incomprehensible. The song begins with the lyrics:

Imi 'Madam Let's Talk' (Your honour 'Madam Let's Talk')
Madam come let's talk

The language that emerges as the song begins cannot be said to be Shona or English but an 'unnamed language' that has come in to facilitate communication between two people who have different first languages. '*Imi*' in Shona is a plural pronoun for 'you,' and is used as a sign of respect to honour the addressee. This pronoun '*imi*' is used when referring to many people but is also used as an honorific pronoun when referring to one person. English employs a single pronoun, 'you,' for both singular and plural second-person references, whereas Shona necessitates specific pronouns to differentiate between singular and plural individuals. In Shona, the pronoun '*imi*' must precede the proper name as a sign of showing respect or honour to a person being addressed. As a sign of respect or honour the pronoun '*imi*' in Shona is used over and above the proper name, a practice which is uncommon in English. When this language practice is imported into English through code-mixing as part of translanguaging then a new language emerges. The pronoun '*imi*' ('you' in plural) when used as a sign of respect represents 'your honour' in English. In this discourse the customer is being respected because she is likely to give business to the vendor. Although the vendor is persuading the customer to buy, she is saying 'Madam come let's talk' as if the client is the one who should go to the vendor. From a Shona perspective, the language that is used when one is negotiating the price would be 'come let's talk', which does not necessarily entail that the customer has to go to the vendor, as would be interpreted in English, but it means that the price is open for negotiation. However, when this utterance is interpreted in English, it would not carry the same meaning that a Shona L1 speaker would have intended to convey.

There are several instances that reflect the emergence of an 'unnamed language' with regards to the semantics of the contents of the song. The vendor says, '*You come down me up*' meaning that, 'if my price is too high for you, I am prepared to reduce if you suggest the figure that you are comfortable with'. The vendor's speech exhibits characteristics of both English and Shona, suggesting the emergence of a hybrid language, akin to *Shonglish*. This phenomenon parallels Wei's (2016) observation of *New Chinglish* as a product of translanguaging among Chinese English speakers. Wei (2016) argues that this new form of English in China possesses unique Chinese characteristics and fulfils a range of communicative, social, and political functions. In Zimbabwe, *Shonglish* is a variety of English that carries characteristics of Shona semantics and is used for trade and other communicative purposes between Shona L1 speakers and English L1 speakers. Other cases of the emergence of a new language in the song appear as follows:

You see madam I come far (Look madam I came from a far-away place)
Come far have Child I come from afar and I have a child
Me have child one two I have two children
One two three four child I have four children
My child no go school I no longer afford to send my children to school
No go school no food My children are not going to school, they have no food).

Because the vendor is speaking English in Shona, all the words used in these utterances are in English but spoken from a Shona perspective. A first language speaker of English who is not conversant with the Zimbabwean linguistic context would hardly understand the meaning conveyed through *Shonalised* English.

Other cases indicating the emergence of a new language, *Shonglish*, are as follows:

So madam buy my dhoiri (Please madam buy these *dhoiri*)
Buy my nice dhoiri Buy these nice *dhoiri*
If you cry I cut you half If you want to bargain I will halve the price
Cut you half napakati I will halve the price for you)

The most interesting part from this excerpt is in the third line '*If you cry I cut you half*'. To a native speaker of English, this statement sounds like a message of warning to a person on whom violence is being unleashed, that is, if he/she makes noise he/she would be cut into two pieces. The speaker is taking the idea from Shona and literally putting it in English. In Shona to bargain is '*kuchema*' which is a homonym of 'cry'. Homonyms are words that are spelled and sound the same but have different meanings. This linguistic overlap, or homophony, allows the vendor to transfer the concept of bargaining from Shona into English, using 'cry' as a substitute. As 'cry' is a more familiar word than 'bargain' for a Shona speaker with limited English proficiency, it becomes the preferred choice. Such a statement would not make sense to an L1 speaker of English unless in cases where there exists mutually exclusive understanding between the two participants in a conversation. There are also cases of code-mixing in these utterances which makes the emerging languaging become even more *Shonglish*. It is important to note that while code-mixing is a component of translanguaging, it does not encompass the full breadth of the concept, as Mazzaferro (2018) argues. Cenoz and Gorter (2011) confirm that translanguaging refers to the combination of two or more languages in a systematic way within utterances. Although I refer to the emerging language as *Shonglish*, it is, however, unnamed since there is no language with such a name. Garcia (2007) posits that since language is a human creation, our linguistic practices should be grounded in real-world language use rather than predefined language categories.

The adage "customer is king" often drives vendors to adopt the customer's language. However, when language proficiency is limited, translanguaging emerges as a communicative strategy. In Oliver Mtukudzi's song, the vendor's

efforts to use English highlight the linguistic dominance associated with wealth and power. The expectation of mutual intelligibility compels those seeking economic benefit to accommodate the language of the affluent. Interestingly, while the song employs English lexicon, the underlying meaning remains deeply rooted in Shona cultural context. The vendor's linguistic choices underscore the hegemonic position of English as the customer's L1 over Shona, the vendor's L1. The repeated use of the word 'madam' reflects the power that is embedded within the customer's language. The following excerpts from the song justify this observation:

Imi 'Madam Let's Talk' (Your honour 'Madam Let's Talk')
 'Madam Let's Talk'
Madam come let's talk
You see madam I come far (Look madam I came from a far-away place)

From a Shona perspective the word 'madam' is used as an honorific address term which implies that the vendor is looking up to the 'white' lady who is a prospective buyer of her products. There is also duplication of honorific address in the utterance where this vendor is saying '*imi* madam...' because '*imi*' a Shona word is an honorific address term. In cases where it is not used as an honorific term, '*imi*' is used as a plural pronoun to refer to many people. Honour is expressed using '*imi*' when addressing one person because this word is normally used when addressing two or more people. In the Shona context, the term 'madam' is a marker of high respect for women. When combined with *imi*, the level of deference is intensified. While translanguaging is often framed as a social justice tool, this Shona-English bilingual vendor's speech reveals English as the dominant lexical element in the emerging language. Despite her primary language being Shona, and limited English proficiency, the vendor's utterances are primarily in English. This suggests a cognitive process where Shona thought is translated into English speech, resulting in a unique linguistic hybrid characterised by English syntax and Shona semantics. Wei (2018) notes that translanguaging goes beyond simply shuttling between linguistic structures, cognitive and modalities.

The linguistic practices employed in the vending context, as exemplified in 'Madam Let's Talk', diverge from standard language use in other domains. The vendor's speech constitutes a unique linguistic repertoire characteristic of Shona-English bilinguals engaged in translanguaging within the vending discourse. This language can only be understood in the context of vending and not in any other context as in the following words:

Madam come let's talk
You come down, me up
If you cry I cut you half

The vendor's utterance of 'come' does not necessarily indicate a physical request for proximity but rather a solicitation for the customer's attention as a prelude to negotiation. The phrase '*Madam come let's talk*' might be perceived as impolite in standard English, but within this context, it is a respectful address. The term 'madam' has undergone a significant recontextualisation, originating from the *Fanigalo* pidgin of South Africa and Zimbabwe, where it was historically used by domestic workers to address their white employers. *Fanigalo* is a pidgin that emerged as a language that was used for communication between domestic workers and their employers. The word 'madam' has expanded in its semantic field to refer to 'white' women by vendors in Zimbabwe. In the language of the vendors, when the word 'talk' is directed to their customers, it does not merely refer to engaging in a conversation but in this context, it specifically means 'negotiating the price'. Translanguaging creates a social space where individuals integrate diverse elements of their personal and social identities into a cohesive and meaningful performance. This includes their life experiences, beliefs, knowledge, and physical context (Wei, 2018). The social space in this case is created through translanguaging where the language being used can only be understood in the context of vending in a bilingual situation.

In the context of vending, as reflected in Oliver Mtukudzi's song, when the vendor is saying 'You come down, me up' she is not literally saying that if the customer is asking for a lower price, she will raise the price but is saying that if the price is higher, she is prepared to reduce it. In this context again, when she is saying 'If you cry I cut you half', she is not saying that if the customer literally cries then she will fight her but she is saying that if the customer wants to bargain then she is prepared to reduce the price by a certain percentage. The language used in the song can only be understood in the context of vending by the Shona L1 speakers and those English L1 speakers who share the same linguistic ecology with the Shona. Language use in such contexts comes through creativity as Wei (2018) says that contacts between people of diverse linguistic backgrounds and traditions provide new opportunities for innovation and creativity as they engage in conversations. The creativity that the language users come up with in such contexts where they will be facilitating communication comes through the process of translanguaging. Over time, participants in this discourse become accustomed to these linguistic practices, fostering mutual comprehension.

As time progresses, the vendors' language becomes a functional mode of communication within this specific discourse community. While the emerging language may incorporate lexical items from the dominant language, the meanings conveyed by these expressions can diverge from their original interpretations. The very creation of this language in response to multilingual communicative needs underscores the inadequacy of traditional language classifications in capturing the linguistic complexities of the 21st century. Translanguaging acknowledges that language is neither fixed nor neutral but is "instead heteroglossic, an ongoing process existing in context and shaped by complex histories of use" (Carvajal-Redigor & Mortenson, 2023, p. 137). The whole idea of a language is to facilitate communication and therefore, sticking to 'named languages' or standard languages in bilingual or multilingual settings

defeat the whole purpose of a language. It is therefore important to emphasise that “translanguaging offers a way through which the creation and recreation of linguistic normalcy may be disrupted and reimagined, as it highlights the construction of speakers interrelated and complex discursive uses and practices that may not necessarily be categorized under the traditional definition of language” (Carvajal-Redigor & Mortenson, 2023, p. 136). The language that is used in Oliver Mtukudzi’s song proves that the most important feature about a language is to operationalise it so that it can facilitate communication in diverse ways between speakers with different first languages. Language classification has been a sociopolitical tool used to control linguistic diversity, excluding mixed language practices and other forms of language use prevalent in multilingual contexts (Poza, 2017). The interesting feature of the language reflected in Oliver Mtukudzi’s song is that it cannot be understood from the perspective of English as a strictly ‘named language’ and even an L2 English speaker who adheres to the strict rules of English would not understand the messages that are being conveyed. Translanguaging is a communicative approach that leverages humans’ ability to access and utilise multiple linguistic and non-linguistic resources flexibly and synergistically to create meaning (Blackledge et al., 2017). Mtukudzi’s song is inspired by his observation that Shona-speaking vendors engage in translanguaging, incorporating elements of both Shona and Ndebele to communicate with their English-speaking customers.

V. CONCLUSION

The translanguaging practice depicted in Oliver Mtukudzi’s song mirrors the power dynamics in an economic asymmetric set-up within a bilingual context. This linguistic phenomenon reflects a hegemonic relationship where English, the dominant language, serves as the lexical source while meaning is derived from the subordinate Shona language. Consequently, translanguaging arising from economic exchanges often exhibits a pattern wherein the language of the economically empowered provides the lexical framework, while the language of the less empowered underpins the semantic content. While traditionally associated with educational settings, research on translanguaging has expanded to encompass diverse contexts of human interaction characterized by bilingualism and multilingualism. Oliver Mtukudzi’s song, ‘Madam Let’s Talk’ exemplifies the adaptability of language in overcoming linguistic barriers. Translanguaging, a practice drawing on all available linguistic resources, generates unique language varieties that defy traditional classification. The ‘unnamed language’ in the song, characterised by English lexical items and Shona semantics, is context-specific and incomprehensible outside its communicative function. As this language emerging through translanguaging becomes normalised, participants develop a shared understanding of its idiosyncratic features.

The fact that an emerging language takes meaning from one language and lexical items from the other, is evidence that while an individual may have two languages that remain separate in the mind, there are instances where these languages interact during speech.

APPENDIX. MTUKUDZI – ‘MADAM LET’S TALK’

Imi ‘Madam Let’s Talk’
 Madam come let’s talk
 Imi ‘Madam Let’s Talk’
 Madam come let’s talk
 Iwe neni ngatisangane iyaa
 Imi ‘Madam Let’s Talk’
 Tasangana titaurarine iya
 Madam come let’s talk
 You come down, me up
 Imi ‘Madam Let’s Talk’
 Chara chimwe hachitswanye inda
 You see madam I come far
 Come far there have child
 Me have child one two
 One two three four child
 My child no go school
 No go school no food
 Imi ‘Madam Let’s Talk’
 Madam come let’s talk
 Imi ‘Madam Let’s Talk’
 Madam come let’s talk
 So madam buy my dhoiri
 Buy my nice dhoiri
 If you cry I cut u half
 Imi ‘Madam Let’s Talk’
 Cut u half napakati

Madam come let's talk
Chara chimwe hachitswanye inda
One finger can't crush lice

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Raphael Nhongo was born in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe on the 7th of December in 1980. He holds a Doctoral degree in Linguistics that was awarded from the University of Fort Hare, South Africa in 2015.

He is currently a lecturer in the Department of Arts, English Linguistics Unit at Walter Sisulu University. He has worked as a lecturer and senior lecturer at universities that include University of Fort Hare, Midlands State University, Lupane State University and Great Zimbabwe university. He did his post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Fort Hare, was a researcher at North-West University and is a Research Fellow at Rhodes University. His research interests are in Linguistics with a bias towards translanguaging, language teaching and learning, terminology development and the intellectualisation of African languages.

Dr Raphael Nhongo is a member of African Languages Association for Southern Africa (ALASA), Names Society of Southern Africa (NSSA), Southern African Association for Language Teaching (SAALT) and Southern African Folklore Society (SAFOS). He has published in areas of translanguaging, language teaching and learning, terminology development, language policy and planning, onomastics and the intellectualisation of African languages.