



Social Transformation in English First Additional Language Teaching and Learning Classrooms: A Multilingual Pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

Appreciating indigenous knowledge systems and the rich history and tradition of South Africa as essential factors in fostering the principles outlined in the Constitution, is one of the aims of the South African Language in Education Policy. The main objective of this paper was to propose a multilingual pedagogy in English First Additional Language classrooms that will cater for all learners in order that they benefit in the learning environment. This study was underpinned by the Indigenous Standpoint Theory, which advocates for a renewed look at how various institutions interpret and analyse indigenous knowledge systems. A qualitative approach, entrenched in an interpretivist paradigm, was utilised to gather data from 12 conveniently sampled grade 10 English First Additional Language educators from the Eastern Cape rural schools in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa through semi-structured interviews, and observations. The results of this inquiry indicated that social transformation could be achieved through the use of the learners' primary languages through codeswitching, translation, and translanguaging as alternative instructional strategies. Social transformation has emerged as an emancipatory factor in EFAL teaching and learning as learners participate actively when their primary languages, in which they are most proficient, are recognised in the classrooms. Thus, a multilingual pedagogy will benefit all types of learners. The author recommends that the Language in Education Policy should have a transformed look at the recognition of indigenous languages, and further recommends multilingual education to have equal educational opportunities.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper explores the concept of a multilingual approach to English First Additional Language (EFAL) teaching and learning, which recognizes the value of learners' native languages and integrates them into the EFAL classroom.¹ Traditional EFAL pedagogies have frequently overlooked the vast linguistic diversity of EFAL learners in favour of immersion and monolingual instruction.² In response to this, a transformed pedagogy aimed at improved learning for all, in particular, a multilingual approach to EFAL teaching and learning, has emerged as a promising paradigm shift.

The typical monolingual method of teaching EFAL frequently only utilizes a Eurocentric language, English, reflecting Western supremacy in post-apartheid South Africa but disregards the learners' original

¹ Department of Education., "Language in Education Policy," 1997.

<https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/LanguageEducationPolicy1997>

² Oluwatoyin A Ajani and Bongani T Gamede, "Decolonising Teacher Education Curriculum in South African Higher Education.," *International Journal of Higher Education* 10, no. 5 (2021): 121–31.

languages and cultural settings.³ Plessis contends that teachers, in general, consider decolonizing the curriculum from the perspective of modifying the material they teach; and, to them, including other authors from Africa, is sufficient.⁴ However, decolonisation of the curriculum engages other factors, as well, like the recognition of the use of indigenous languages for instruction and learning.

South African schools continue to present an image of the nation submerged in colonial and apartheid ideology despite the country having enjoyed many years of democracy.⁵ Ndlovu-Gatsheni identifies colonialism as a practice that engages in exploitation, including epistemicide, that is, the killing and displacement of pre-existing knowledge.⁶ Furthermore, colonialism results in linguicide, that is, the killing and displacement of a people's language and the imposition of your own; and culturecide, the death or replacement of a people's culture (*op cit*). The curriculum in schools is still mainly Westernized, more of a white European view of what should be included in the curriculum. The process of colonization caused the colonized to lose confidence in their language, their names, their cultures, and their histories.⁷ The colonial period also resulted in assigning English names to the indigenous people so as to fit into the Western world.

Le Grange argues that decolonizing a curriculum means moving away from Western individualism and toward an Ubuntu-infused education that respects human freedom.⁸ If the indigenous languages are accepted by the schools as official languages of instruction, then human independence has been attained. This calls for the incorporation of African knowledge into mainstream epistemological discourses, but it does not necessarily imply the annihilation of dominant knowledge systems.⁹ Naicker opines that decolonizing university curricula and academic culture will bring about the institutions' intended societal change.¹⁰ Omodan et al. contend that decolonizing the curriculum should be understood as an advocacy to confront current power dynamics and include historically marginalized or excluded methods of doing so.¹¹

Research has shown that a multilingual approach can yield significant benefits.¹² Teachers can access a variety of cognitive and linguistic resources that can improve learning by recognizing and utilizing students' home languages.¹³ This strategy supports the idea of "translanguaging," in which language learners flexibly pull from their entire repertoire to understand and produce language. A translanguaging pedagogy, according to academics, is organizing and planning instructional procedures that appeal to the full language repertoire of multilingual students as a learning resource.¹⁴

According to the National Language Policy Framework, "The Constitution emphasizes that all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and be treated equitably, thereby enhancing the status and use of indigenous languages, with government taking legislative and other measures to regulate and monitor the use of disadvantaged indigenous languages."¹⁵ Contrarily, the LiEP recommends mother tongue instruction in the lower grades only, while recognising English usage from the upper primary grades to the Higher Institutions of Learning.¹⁶ Therefore, the phrases 'parity of esteem' and 'equitable treatment' of languages need careful observation. A number of studies advocate for the recognition of indigenous languages as resources to maximise

³ Ajani and Gamede, "Decolonising Teacher Education Curriculum in South African Higher Education.," S. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Decolonisation, Decoloniality, and the Future of the African Studies: A Conversation with Dr Sabelo-Ndlovu Gatsheni.," <https://items.ssrc.org/from-our-programs/decolonization-decoloniality-and-the-future-of-african-studies-a-conversation-with-dr-sabelo-ndlovu-gatsheni/#:~:text=gun%20is%20not-sufficient,-%20it%20requires%20dealing>, 2019.

⁴ Pierre Du Plessis, "Decolonisation of Education in South Africa: Challenges to Decolonise the University Curriculum," *South African Journal of Higher Education* 35, no. 1 (2021): 54–69.

⁵ Du Plessis, "Decolonisation of Education in South Africa: Challenges to Decolonise the University Curriculum."

⁶ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Decolonisation, Decoloniality, and the Future of the African Studies: A Conversation with Dr Sabelo-Ndlovu Gatsheni."

⁷ L Le Grange, "Decolonising the University Curriculum," *South African Journal of Higher Education* 30, no. 2 (June 2016), <https://doi.org/10.20853/30-2-709>.

⁸ Le Grange, "Decolonising the University Curriculum."

⁹ Le Grange, "Decolonising the University Curriculum."

¹⁰ C. Naicker, "Panel Discussion, Conference on Decolonizing the Academy, University of Edinburgh, April 22," 2016.

¹¹ Bunmi Isaiah Omodan, Pretty Thandiswa Mpiti, and Nomxolisi Mtsi, "A Conceptual Analysis of What It Means to Decolonize the Curriculum," *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 22, no. 7 (2023): 344–55.

¹² M.F. Omidire, "Embracing Multilingualism as a Reality in Classrooms: An Introduction.," in *Multilingualism in the Classroom: Teaching and Learning in a Challenging Context*, ed. M.F. Omidire (Cape Town: Juta & Co, 2019); S. Ayob, "The Utilisation of Translanguaging for Learning and Teaching in Multilingual Primary Schools" (University of Pretoria. South Africa., 2020).

¹³ Jennifer Burton and Shakina Rajendram, "Translanguaging-as-Resource: University ESL Instructors' Language Orientations and Attitudes Toward Translanguaging," *TESL Canada Journal* 36, no. 1 (October 1, 2019): 21–47, <https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v36i1.1301>.

¹⁴ Burton and Rajendram, "Translanguaging-as-Resource: University ESL Instructors' Language Orientations and Attitudes Toward Translanguaging."

¹⁵ Department of Arts and Culture, "National Language Policy Framework. 2003. Implementation Plan. ," <https://www.dac.gov.za>, 2003.

¹⁶ Language in Education Policy Document (LiEP), (Pretoria: Government Printers, 1997).

and access knowledge. Although some scholars recommend the recognition of indigenous languages as valuable assets which compensate for the learners' socio-cultural and linguistic backgrounds,¹⁷ Wu posits that teachers, as need analysts, should examine contexts in which the learners' primary languages can be used to facilitate learning.¹⁸ They should take into consideration the "levels of competence and attitudes of learners toward using the first languages."¹⁹ In this regard, there are conflicting ideas about mother tongue instruction in schools. According to various studies, South African children, due to their study of a second language, experience a "language problem", and, thus, must overcome the difficulties of learning in a language in which they are unable to construct ideas and exhibit originality of thought. This language difficulty provides severe obstacles to language educators. A number of studies have shown that in contexts where learners are given opportunities to use their primary languages in the classroom, more effective learning has been facilitated.²⁰ Similarly, Nagy contends that translanguaging can be instigated in numerous accomplishments ranging from oral proficiency skills to comprehension skills.²¹ Ayob posits that all types of learners, including underperforming learners, benefit from translanguaging because they are also involved and participate in learning activities.²² Translanguaging promotes linguistic interconnectivity. By recognizing the structural and grammatical similarities between learners' native languages and English, educators can facilitate quicker language acquisition and a deeper understanding of linguistic concepts.

Moreover, a multilingual approach fosters a sense of cultural inclusivity and supports learners in maintaining a positive self-identity.²³ Garcia discusses the notion of "transanguaging" which involves using multiple languages as part of the learning process.²⁴ Translanguaging not only aids communication but also acknowledges learners' rich linguistic backgrounds, enhancing their confidence and motivation to engage with English.²⁵

Translanguaging promotes metalinguistic awareness.²⁶ Learners gain an increased awareness of language structures and patterns as they compare and contrast multiple languages. This metalinguistic insight can accelerate their language development. When learners see their native language valued and incorporated into the learning process, they tend to be more motivated and engaged, leading to better learning outcomes. Multilingual learners often possess advanced communication skills due to their exposure to diverse linguistic contexts. Integrating these skills into English Second Language instruction can enhance learners' overall communicative competence.

In this paper, the author is of the view that translanguaging pedagogy has not yet received much attention in schools because it has not yet been mandated by the Constitution to be adopted in ESL classrooms. Its mandate is still in print; and has not yet been implemented practically. It is only a small sector of education, that is, the lower primary grades, where mother tongue based education enjoys full operation. Moreover, a gap that has been identified by this study is whether the indigenous languages can be used as languages of assessment, following scholars' recommendations about the use of the learners' primary languages as languages of instruction. The following questions guided this paper:-

- How can a multilingual pedagogy be achieved in English Second Language classrooms?
- What benefits can be achieved from a multilingual pedagogy?

¹⁷ Ayob, "The Utilisation of Translanguaging for Learning and Teaching in Multilingual Primary Schools"; Jim Cummins, "The Emergence of Translanguaging Pedagogy: A Dialogue between Theory and Practice.," *Journal of Multilingual Education Research* 9, no. 13 (2019): 19–36; Omidire, "Embracing Multilingualism as a Reality in Classrooms: An Introduction."

¹⁸ Sipeng Wu, "Using the First Language in the Second Language Classroom," 2018.

¹⁹ Wu, "Using the First Language in the Second Language Classroom."

²⁰ Vukile Desmond Mgijima and Leketi Makalela, "The Effects of Translanguaging on the Bi-Literate Inferencing Strategies of Fourth Grade Learners," 2016; Ofelia García, "Translanguaging: A Coda to the Code?," *Classroom Discourse* 10, no. 3–4 (October 2, 2019): 369–73, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19463014.2019.1638277>; Shannon M Daniel et al., "Scaffolding to Make Translanguaging a Classroom Norm," *Tesol Journal* 10, no. 1 (2019): e00361; Joy Christine Lwanga-Lumu, "Intercultural Communicative Component (ICC) in the English Second Language (EL2) Curricula: Trends and Challenges of Transformation in South Africa (SA) and the Global World," *Journal of Intercultural Communication* 20, no. 1 (2020): 1–16.

²¹ Tünde Nagy, "On Translanguaging and Its Role in Foreign Language Teaching," *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Philologica* 10, no. 2 (November 1, 2018): 41–53, <https://doi.org/10.2478/ausp-2018-0012>.

²² Ayob, "The Utilisation of Translanguaging for Learning and Teaching in Multilingual Primary Schools."

²³ Bonny Norton and Kelleen Toohey, "Identity, Language Learning, and Social Change," *Language Teaching* 44, no. 4 (2011): 412–46.

²⁴ García, "Translanguaging: A Coda to the Code?"

²⁵ Ofelia García et al., *Language, Bilingualism and Education* (Springer, 2014); Ricardo Otheguy, Ofelia García, and Wallis Reid, "Clarifying Translanguaging and Deconstructing Named Languages: A Perspective from Linguistics," *Applied Linguistics Review* 6, no. 3 (2015): 281–307.

²⁶ Colin Baker, *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* (Multilingual matters, 2011).

This investigation is rooted in an interpretive approach, entrenched in qualitative approaches, which aimed at producing rich information regarding social transformation in EFAL classrooms. Data, which was analysed through content analysis, were gathered through semi-structured interviews, and observations from 12 purposely chosen grade 10 EFAL educators from the Eastern Cape rural schools in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies have been documented by various scholars to acknowledge the benefits of social transformation in ESL learning and teaching. While allowing students to use their native languages and literacies, translanguaging acknowledges and values the community's linguistic variety.²⁷ In reality, translanguaging sustains home language practices more than any other practice or methodology. Similarly, Cummins asserts that some advantages of translanguaging include bridging the home and the school and integrating the outside world into the classroom.²⁸ Bartlett & García emphasise that translanguaging does not only promote language maintenance but also results in the sustainability of language practices.²⁹ Thus, social transformation in ESL classrooms will have improved results because learners will associate learning with their real-life encounters. This will, therefore, lead to improved participation in the learning environment.

Chen conducted a study to investigate the effects of incorporating the learners' primary languages in implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in a mixed English conversation class.³⁰ A mixed conversation class is a class where the learners' primary language is used to facilitate comprehension. The main objective of Chen's study was to investigate whether learners can improve their attitude towards learning when teaching methods are adjusted. Results showed that learners were comfortable with implementing CLT in the class in an adjusted manner. According to Chen, an adjusted manner means allowing the use of the learners' primary language to facilitate comprehension.³¹ It was, therefore, revealed that when students lack confidence, using their mother tongue may help them feel less anxious in the CLT classroom. Chen, cited in Toro, Camacho-Minuche, Pinza-Tapia and Paredes, revealed that after the use of role-playing, visual aids like photographs, and teaching strategies that used the learners' primary language had been modified in the CLT classroom, students displayed significant changes in their learning abilities and actively participated in class events.³² Athawandi also indicated that students in Libyan universities were not qualified to meet CLT's needs.³³ The language itself is the major challenge for children whose primary language is not English. To ESL and EFL learners, the language of learning is a barrier because the syntactical structure of Eurocentric languages is different from other language structures. It was also revealed that the education system did not meet the goals of modern teaching methods.

Some scholars in Bangladesh, such as Chowdhury and Le Ha, questioned CLT's applicability and instructional appropriateness in a completely different Eastern environment, such as Bangladesh, where "a teacher-centered approach controls pedagogic practice."³⁴ These academics were concerned about the differences in syntactical organization between Western and Eastern countries, which could create communication hurdles. Therefore, learners' home languages are preferred to facilitate learning.

Both grammatical and literary knowledge are essential variables for interpreting texts. Students who lack grammatical skills will have a difficult time deciphering texts. Hassan discovered that language teachers face common challenges when teaching literary texts in his research.³⁵ They all saw language and other aspects of unfamiliar culture as sources of difficulties in literary studies. Another issue was the students' inability to

²⁷ Lesley Bartlett and Ofelia García, "Additive Schooling in Subtractive Times," *Dominican Immigrant Youth in the Heights*, 2011.

²⁸ Cummins, "The Emergence of Translanguaging Pedagogy: A Dialogue between Theory and Practice."

²⁹ Bartlett and García, "Additive Schooling in Subtractive Times."

³⁰ Wen-Wen Cheng, "A Case Study of Action Research on Communicative Language Teaching," *Journal of Interdisciplinary Mathematics* 18, no. 6 (November 2, 2015): 705–17, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09720502.2015.1108075>.

³¹ Cheng, "A Case Study of Action Research on Communicative Language Teaching."

³² Cheng, "A Case Study of Action Research on Communicative Language Teaching"; Vanessa Toro et al., "The Use of the Communicative Language Teaching Approach to Improve Students' Oral Skills," *English Language Teaching* 12, no. 1 (December 14, 2018): 110, <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v12n1p110>.

³³ Ahmed Athawadi, "Factors Hindering the Implementation of Communicative Language Teaching in Libyan University English Classes," *European Journal of English Language Teaching*, 2019.

³⁴ Raqib Chowdhury and Phan Le Ha, "Reflecting on Western TESOL Training and Communicative Language Teaching: Bangladeshi Teachers' Voices," *Asia Pacific Journal of Education* 28, no. 3 (September 2008): 305–16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188790802236006>.

³⁵ Khandoker Montasir Hassan, "Difficulties Facing English Teachers in Teaching Literary Texts at Higher Secondary Level in Bangladesh," *English Language and Literature Studies* 8, no. 3 (2018): 15–26.

deal with the materials due to their lack of English language competency.³⁶ In this regard, social transformation in English offers possibilities for inclusion of all learners, so that they can all benefit in the learning environment.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper was underpinned by the Indigenous Standpoint Theory, which advocates for the recognition of indigenous languages. Indigenous institutions, knowledge, traditions, and cultural sciences were eradicated and destroyed as a result of the British system.³⁷ The Indigenous Standpoint Theory emerged from the Critical Theory, whose goal is to liberate communities and individual groups from oppression, incapability, and conditions that restrict control over their lives.³⁸ The Indigenous Standpoint also evolved from the Feminist Standpoint. It refers to a social viewpoint that offers a framework for understanding how the dominant discourse and society at large affect various aspects of life. Actually, countries that were colonised and subjugated by the Western powers, were forced to adopt the languages of their colonial masters. Thus, abandoning their indigenous languages, and adopting foreign cultures. The knowledge that is valid, and whose knowledge is, according to European scientists, is based on Western epistemologies. Indigenous wisdom was viewed as inferior, as a result. A new agenda is being created by the formation of an Indigenous Standpoint Theory in modern Indigenous research in order to modify the power dynamics of contemporary literature, which support the predominance of Western rhetoric.³⁹ In general, indigenous peoples have been subjugated and vanquished by industrialized capitalist weapons, and military technologically advanced weaponry to the point of extirpation, with the racist superior Eurasian society supporting this annihilation.⁴⁰ To overcome the current power imbalance, the Indigenous Standpoint Theory advocates for the acknowledgement of indigenous knowledge systems. In this paper, this theory supports social transformation in EFAL classrooms to redress the marginalisation of indigenous languages.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper used the interpretivist paradigm, which favors socially created multiple realisms in which truth and genuineness are produced, rather than found. This paper utilised a case study to represent the bigger population which might not give detailed information about a multi-lingual approach in ESL classrooms. The population for this paper comprised grade 10 teachers who teach English as a First Additional Language in rural schools. Convenience sampling was utilised to select the participants of this inquiry. Semi-structured interviews were administered to get in-depth knowledge about the teachers' views regarding the use of English as an instructional language in schools. Observations were also conducted to confirm the responses obtained from interviews. Interviews were conducted for a period of six days, with two interviews conducted each day. With permission from the participants, the interviews were audio-taped. In total, six observations were conducted. Each teacher was observed twice. The first observation was to allow the participants the opportunity to familiarise themselves with an intruder in their classrooms. The author used content analysis to analyse data. During data analysis, the author looked for similarities in the data gathered from interviews and observations. This was followed by clustering similar data together, and themes were formulated from those groupings. Findings, therefore, emerged from the discussion and analysis of data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section, findings are presented in themes, which emerged from the analysis. These were discussed sequentially as follows: Promoting the use of indigenous languages; codeswitching, translation, and translanguaging as alternative instructional strategies, and; social transformation as an emancipatory factor.

Promoting the Use of Indigenous Languages

Some interview responses showed that teachers have conflicting ideas about the utilisation of English for instructional purposes. For some, using English as a Language of Learning and Teaching perpetuates

³⁶ Hassan, "Difficulties Facing English Teachers in Teaching Literary Texts at Higher Secondary Level in Bangladesh."

³⁷ Lester-Irabinna Rigney, "A First Perspective of Indigenous Australian Participation in Science: Framing Indigenous Research towards Indigenous Australian Intellectual Sovereignty" (Aboriginal Research Institute, University of South Australia Adelaide, Australia, 2001).

³⁸ Dennis Foley, "Indigenous Epistemology and Indigenous Standpoint Theory," *Social Alternatives* 22, no. 1 (2003): 44–52.

³⁹ Martin Nakata, "Anthropological Texts and Indigenous Standpoints," *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, no. 2 (1998): 3–12; Rigney, "A First Perspective of Indigenous Australian Participation in Science: Framing Indigenous Research towards Indigenous Australian Intellectual Sovereignty."

⁴⁰ J. Diamond, *Guns, Gems, and Steel. The Fates of Human Societies* (New York : W.W. Norton and Company, 1999).

marginalisation of the indigenous languages. The response below shows that some participants perceive the use of English as fostering language inequality with English as a dominant language.

I think that our education system is not liberated at all, yes, English should be used for a limited time period huge steps need to be taken to change the status quo and allow indigenous languages to be used as languages of learning and assessment. (Participant E)

The claim above has been supported by a number of scholars.⁴¹ In contrast to the monolingual approach, researchers who subscribe to a translanguaging philosophy of language examine the use of pedagogics that enable students to use all of their linguistic wealth in order to interconnect and negotiate meaning.⁴² Despite research discussing the capacity of a translanguaging education to support learners' conception of multifaceted texts and content and in their development of improved knowledge of their language learning to broaden their extensive repertoires, there is still a misalliance between translanguaging as a perception and translanguaging as a practice,⁴³ predominantly in the higher education framework.⁴⁴ This reveals that translanguaging has not yet gained prominence in ESL classrooms; there is an urgent need to put theory into practice.

A major threat facing mother-tongue education is that examinations are conducted in English, and, in preparation for life beyond high school, learners need to know English, which functions as an intermingling factor among different tribes. In this regard, Howie et. al emphasises the simultaneous development of both English and the learners' languages.⁴⁵

"The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), which is the national curriculum, emphasises the importance of student proficiency in at least two languages and being able to communicate in others. The language-specific curricula follow an additive approach to multilingualism, namely, all students learn a language on a "home language" level (which for most would be their home language) and at least one additional official language, and become competent in their additional language on a second-language level, while the home language is maintained and developed."⁴⁶

The language curricula promote the simultaneous development of the learners' home and target languages. This suggests that multilingualism does not pose any threats to the development of other languages. In this study, the researcher argues that languages should be developed to the fullest during the stipulated times assigned to them. The CAPS document provides guidelines to be followed to promote language development.⁴⁷ A policy that aimed at the promotion and strengthening of African languages was piloted in 2014 "across eight provinces and in 228 schools."⁴⁸ The aim of this policy is to promote multilingualism in English Second Language classrooms. At this stage, this pilot has not yet developed for recognition at the national level. Thus, translanguaging has not yet been established and authorised for implementation in English Second Language classrooms. Furthermore, teacher-training institutions have not yet been equipped with explicit guidelines on how teachers should be trained to implement translanguaging education

Codeswitching, translation and translanguaging as alternative instructional strategies

During the interviews and observations, participants revealed that codeswitching, translation, and translanguaging facilitate comprehension of texts. The excerpts below were retrieved from Participant B's and E's classrooms. When the teacher engaged in paraphrasing, he resorted to codeswitching.

⁴¹ María del Carmen Salazar, "A Humanizing Pedagogy: Reinventing the Principles and Practice of Education as a Journey toward Liberation," *Review of Research in Education* 37, no. 1 (2013): 121–48; García et al., *Language, Bilingualism and Education*; Margie Childs, "Reflecting on Translanguaging in Multilingual Classrooms: Harnessing the Power of Poetry and Photography," *Educational Research for Social Change* 5, no. 1 (2016): 22–40, <https://doi.org/10.17159/2221-4070/2016/v5i1a2>; Mgijima and Makalela, "The Effects of Translanguaging on the Bi-Literate Inferencing Strategies of Fourth Grade Learners"; Daniel et al., "Scaffolding to Make Translanguaging a Classroom Norm"; Ayob, "The Utilisation of Translanguaging for Learning and Teaching in Multilingual Primary Schools."

⁴² Ofelia García, *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2009).

⁴³ Suresh Canagarajah, *Translingual Practice: Global Englishes and Cosmopolitan Relations* (Routledge, 2012).

⁴⁴ García, *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective*.

⁴⁵ Sarah Howie et al., *PIRLS Literacy 2016: Progress in International Reading Literacy Study 2016: South African Children's Reading Literacy Achievement* (Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA), Faculty of Education, University ..., 2017).

⁴⁶ Howie et al., *PIRLS Literacy 2016: Progress in International Reading Literacy Study 2016: South African Children's Reading Literacy Achievement*.

⁴⁷ Department of Basic Education. (2011). Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement. English First Additional Language Grades 10-12. Government Printers: Pretoria.

⁴⁸ Howie et al., *PIRLS Literacy 2016: Progress in International Reading Literacy Study 2016: South African Children's Reading Literacy Achievement*.

Other girls at school....they would come to her xa bexakwe yinto ebaxakileyo at school (other girls would go to her when they had problems). Babemthuka (they insulted her).....they called her by names. Abantu abafunda naye (her classmates) they always teased her. Other girls expected ukuba uSizwe athi go for them....other schoolmates began to be jealous....ude atsho uSizwe athi if yinto oyifunayo ukufunda we gonna read books (Sizwe even says that if she wants to read, she will). (Participant B) uHlonela ufunda incwadi yakhe (Hlonela reads his book).....Incwadi ifundwa nguHlonela (The book is read by Hlonela). (Participant E)

The responses above show codeswitching, translation and translanguaging processes employed by teachers in the EFAL classrooms. A number of studies have shown that translanguaging has had beneficial effects in EFAL classrooms.⁴⁹ Salazar asserts that learners have different language proficiencies that need to be catered for by EFAL teachers.⁵⁰ She further explains that learners who struggle with the primary language in the classroom are regarded as deficient and incapable of learning. When the “treasures of language and culture are forced to remain outside the classroom door, this can result in a sense of humiliation at the rejection of vital aspects of being human.”⁵¹ Ayob maintains that the difference between the LoLT and the learners’ primary languages creates discomfort, and, thus, communication breakdown, which leads to dehumanising conditions in the classroom.⁵²

However, translanguaging has not gone without criticism. Ayob asserts that although multilingual education is valued and beneficial to learners, and has been used to close the gap in language discrepancy, the reality is that in an attempt to implement scaffolded practices that enhance effective teaching, there is a problem.⁵³ The problem lies in the fact that translation compromises such features as grammatically correct sentences and vocabulary development in the target language. In a study conducted by Deumert, it was found that English is preferred among isiXhosa speakers while texting since they find the language (isiXhosa) difficult to understand.⁵⁴ In the researcher’s opinion, although translanguaging acts as a mingling factor and minimizes the authority and power of the teacher as a dominant figure in the classroom, it is a one-way process as the learners are still required to respond in the target language. In trilingual classrooms, in which learners speak more than two languages, learning and teaching might occur at a slow rate as much time might be dedicated to meeting learners’ individual needs. Moreover, teacher training institutions have not yet embarked on training multilingual teachers. Prinsloo et al., argue that English instruction is preferred by rural parents for their children.⁵⁵ This is due to the parents’ fear of their learners being detached from globalisation. However, the simultaneous development of the official languages promotes multilingualism if both languages receive equal recognition and status.

Social Transformation as an Emancipatory Factor

Previous studies have shown that it is extremely difficult to teach effectively when students have a bad attitude toward English.⁵⁶ Due to their inadequate language proficiency, learners are unable to participate fully in class activities, which results in this negative attitude.⁵⁷ The participants’ responses below indicate how the language barrier is a hindrance to effective teaching and learning:-

Learners participate actively when they are assigned group tasks in class but when they are required to do presentations, they are hindered by the language used in the classroom Learners understand the lesson presented to them but are unable to express themselves in English. (Participant C)

⁴⁹ Omidire, “Embracing Multilingualism as a Reality in Classrooms: An Introduction.”; Daniel et al., “Scaffolding to Make Translanguaging a Classroom Norm”; Nontokozo Mashiya, “Mother Tongue Teaching at the University of KwaZulu-Natal: Opportunities and Threats,” *Alternation* 17, no. 1 (2010): 92–107; Tünde Nagy, “On Translanguaging and Its Role in Foreign Language Teaching,” *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Philologica* 10, no. 2 (2018): 41–53.

⁵⁰ del Carmen Salazar, “A Humanizing Pedagogy: Reinventing the Principles and Practice of Education as a Journey toward Liberation.”

⁵¹ del Carmen Salazar, “A Humanizing Pedagogy: Reinventing the Principles and Practice of Education as a Journey toward Liberation”; Ayob, “The Utilisation of Translanguaging for Learning and Teaching in Multilingual Primary Schools.”

⁵² Ayob, “The Utilisation of Translanguaging for Learning and Teaching in Multilingual Primary Schools.”

⁵³ Ayob, “The Utilisation of Translanguaging for Learning and Teaching in Multilingual Primary Schools.”

⁵⁴ Ana Deumert, “Tracking the Demographics of (Urban) Language Shift – an Analysis of South African Census Data,” *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 31, no. 1 (February 2010): 13–35, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434630903215125>.

⁵⁵ C H Prinsloo, S C Rogers, and J C Harvey, “The Impact of Language Factors on Learner Achievement in Science,” *South African Journal of Education* 38, no. 1 (2018).

⁵⁶ Mary Susan Anyiendah, “Challenges Faced by Teachers When Teaching English in Public Primary Schools in Kenya,” *Frontiers in Education* 2 (May 5, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2017.00013>.

⁵⁷ Peter Jordens, Esther Usó-Juan, and Alicia Martínez-Flor, *Current Trends in the Development and Teaching of the Four Language Skills* (Mouton de Gruyter, 2006).

The response above revealed that social transformation in English can be an emancipatory factor because if the classroom language is confined to the usage of English only, learners feel threatened by this practice. A significant challenge facing learners is that English is a second language to them, so, they have difficulties in grasping its structures. Leong and Ahmadi postulate that learners' low achievement in English is caused by the fear of making mistakes because learners lack basic grammatical knowledge.⁵⁸ Furthermore, the response above indicates that codeswitching is a prerogative of the teacher only, while learners are restricted to expressing themselves in their own language. Henceforth, in group tasks, where learners brainstorm ideas, they participate easily because they are free to use their primary languages.⁵⁹ This shows that translanguaging emancipates learners from the fear of committing grammatical errors. A number of studies show that the use of the learners' primary language is beneficial.⁶⁰

Tella et al. reveal that learners do not participate actively during English lessons because they lack the required proficiency, which was not developed during their earliest years of schooling.⁶¹ This language barrier is a major factor that correlates to low learner engagement, which ultimately has a significant negative impact on English language competence. Therefore, teachers struggle to support learners in attaining the expected proficiency in English. To overcome learners' language barrier, teachers resort to using the learners' primary language.

In most cases, teachers switch between English and isiXhosa because of the linguistic background of learners. (Participant A)

The claim above indicates that language barriers can have negative effects on language learning and teaching. Mastery of English skills can be facilitated when learning and teaching take place in the target language. In South African schools, English, as the language of instruction, commences from Grade 4 up to the higher grades.⁶² This comes after the Foundation Phase or the first three years of mother education in the lower primary grades. However, according to the South African curriculum school system, English is one of the three courses taught in the Foundation Phase. For instance, the Foundation Phase teaches courses like math, literacy, and life skills. English and the pupils' native tongue make up literacy. This implies that English instruction, as a subject in the Foundation Phase, is a requisite. The learners' native languages are used as the language of instruction in all the foundation phase disciplines. English is taught during English periods only. This might be a hindering factor in the acquisition of English skills. In the upper grades, learners experience challenges in the practice of English as an instructional language after mother tongue based instruction. For some learners, exposure to English starts and ends in the classroom, thus, limiting social contact with English speakers and the opportunity to learn language structures and use them in an informal context.⁶³ South African learners face a language barrier by virtue of being Second Language learners of English. The author argues that the scenario outlined here can be eliminated if a social transformation in English, that is, mother-tongue based education, can be mandatory across all grades.

In ESL classrooms, teachers are obliged to code-switch or translate into the learners' primary language because learners do not have the requisite skills to engage in discourse in a foreign language. Most of the teachers who participated in this study scaffolded their teaching practices by switching to the learners' mother tongue to mediate learning. The Languages Curriculum, under the LiEP and the Norms and Standards of Education, promotes additive multilingualism, which advocates that the learners' home languages should be developed simultaneously with the First Additional and Second languages.⁶⁴ Hence, English is learnt as a subject in the Foundation Phase.

The primary languages of the learners should be recognized as treasures to support learning and instruction, according to Lwanga-Lumu.⁶⁵ However, Wu contends that contexts, under which first languages

⁵⁸ Lai Mei Leong and Seyedeh Masoumeh Ahmadi, "An Analysis Of Factors Influencing Learners' english Speaking Skill," 2017.

⁵⁹ Grace Jue Yeon Kim and Zhenjie Weng, "A Systematic Review on Pedagogical Translanguaging in TESOL," *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language Journal--TESL-EJ* 26, no. 3 (November 1, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.55593/ej.26103a4>.

⁶⁰ García et al., *Language, Bilingualism and Education*; Mgiijima and Makalela, "The Effects of Translanguaging on the Bi-Literate Inferencing Strategies of Fourth Grade Learners"; Omidire, "Embracing Multilingualism as a Reality in Classrooms: An Introduction."; Ayob, "The Utilisation of Translanguaging for Learning and Teaching in Multilingual Primary Schools."

⁶¹ John Tella, Francis Chisikwa Indoshi, and Lucas A Othuon, "Relationship between Students' Perspectives on the Secondary School English Curriculum and Their Academic Achievement in Kenya," *Educational Research* 1, no. 9 (2010): 390–95.

⁶² Language in Education Policy Document (LiEP).

⁶³ Tamara Monique Alexander, "Teacher-Student Relationships and Academic Achievement" (Walden University, 2014).

⁶⁴ Language in Education Policy Document (LiEP).

⁶⁵ Lwanga-Lumu, "Intercultural Communicative Component (ICC) in the English Second Language (EL2) Curricula: Trends and Challenges of Transformation in South Africa (SA) and the Global World."

are utilised in English Second Language classrooms, should be taken into serious consideration.⁶⁶ Recent language teaching methods recommend the use of texts as valuable assets that provide authentic materials to facilitate learning and teaching. However, teachers code-switch because learners face challenges in absorbing information due to limited language skills. Research has shown that many learners do not have access to reading materials outside the school environment due to different socio-economic backgrounds. Chakraborty and Harper assert that learners' achievement at school is strongly influenced by their socio-economic status.⁶⁷ Thus, codeswitching practices upgrade and compensate for the learners' linguistic deficiencies.

In this study, the researcher argues that codeswitching and multilingual classrooms need a non-aligned language that benefits the majority of learners. However, many parents prefer their learners to be taught in English.⁶⁸ This reveals that there are still conflicting ideas about the use of the learners' home languages as languages of learning and teaching.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The author recommends that the Language in Education Policy should have a transformed look at the recognition of indigenous languages, and recommends multilingual education to have equal educational opportunities. Furthermore, the author recommends that indigenous languages be recognised during the administration of assessments and examinations. However, the researcher calls for vocabulary development of the indigenous languages. This could be done by borrowing from other languages just like how Afrikaans emerged as an official language by borrowing from various languages including the Nguni languages, Dutch, Khoisan Languages, and others. The same relates to English which borrowed from different languages including Latin and French. In this regard, social transformation will gain prominent status from both learners and teachers.

CONCLUSION

This paper investigated how social transformation can be achieved in EFAL classrooms. The outcomes of this study indicated that promoting the use of indigenous languages, codeswitching, translation, and translanguaging could be re-evaluated if social transformation is to be achieved. Furthermore, findings also indicated that social transformation in EFAL classrooms is an emancipatory factor as it allows learners to express themselves in languages of their choice. Social transformation will bring freedom of expression to all in the classroom. In this regard, the authority figure of the teacher, as the only source of knowledge in the classroom, will be eliminated. Classrooms will no longer be dominated by the teacher, as learners' challenges of being forced to communicate in a language that is foreign to them, are eradicated. The by-products of social transformation in EFAL classrooms are the preservation and revitalisation of the learners' culture. For a long time, both learners and teachers have been exposed to the Western culture through monolingual instruction in a Eurocentric language.

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⁶⁶ Wu, "Using the First Language in the Second Language Classroom."

⁶⁷ Kalyan Chakraborty and Richard K Harper, "Measuring the Impact of Socio-Economic Factors on School Efficiency in Australia," *Atlantic Economic Journal* 45 (2017): 163–79.

⁶⁸ Matome M Mabiletja, "Parents' Direct or Indirect Involvement in the Choice of Language of Learning and Teaching," *South African Journal of African Languages* 38, no. 3 (2018): 355–62; Aubrey T. Tsebe and Vanessa Scherman, "Towards a Theory of Parental Support: Development of English First Additional Language for Grade 4 Learners," *Literator* 41, no. 1 (March 26, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.4102/lit.v41i1.1642>.

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