

Enhancing Creativity: The Impact of Multilingualism on Creative Arts Instruction and Expression in South African Schools



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ABSTRACT

Teachers heavily rely on the dominant language of instruction—a spoken and written mode of communication—rather than expressing creative art forms through actions, signs, symbols, and other means. The reliance on monolingual forms of instruction to teach these art forms may diminish their efficacy. This research thus aimed to optimise the use of multilingualism in the context of Creative Arts and expression. Teachers teach Creative Arts with the aim of equipping learners with fundamental knowledge and skills in the arts, thereby fostering creativity, imagination, and appreciation for artistic activities. Multilingualism also entails using the human senses to see, understand, and navigate the various symbolic worlds humans encounter. The study adopted a transformational paradigm based on qualitative participatory research, focusing on ten eighth-grade learners purposefully selected from a particular school. Semiotics, the study of signals and the epistemology of their presence in society, served as the theoretical foundation for the research. The researcher collected data through focus groups and observations and then used a narrative analysis method for analysis. The findings revealed that limitations such as insufficient instructional time, a lack of training and linguistic dominance, a lack of resources, and limited preparedness impede the effective use of multilingual instructional methodologies. The researcher concludes that compulsory incorporation of semiotics in Creative Arts instruction may be crucial in fostering creative thinkers who cannot only express creative practices in a conventional manner but also use their talents in other domains, such as animation in creative practice.

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Publication History

Received: 30th May, 2024

Accepted: 10th September, 2024

Published online:

15th October, 2024

Keywords: *Multilingualism, Creative Arts, Semiotics, Transformational Paradigm, Participatory Research.*

INTRODUCTION

Despite the official endorsement of multilingualism, political influence from individuals in positions of authority has given the English language a higher significance in the school system, particularly in South Africa, where it is considered the language of academia.¹ Consequently, many teachers continue to prioritise English as the primary language for instruction and assessment of learners in the senior phase of the General Education and Training (GET) Band. This monolingual approach often leads to a reliance

¹ Vimbai Mbirimi-Hungwe, “Promoting Multilingualism through Translanguaging in South African Classrooms,” *Journal for Language Teaching* 57, no. 1 (2023).

on verbal communication for sharing knowledge in Creative Arts education. This paper seeks to clarify the current dominance of using only one language in Creative Arts instruction and advocates for the use of multilingualism to improve Creative Arts expression and teaching methods.

The curricular framework for the Creative Arts discipline in South African schools, spanning from Grade R through Grade 9, encompasses a diverse array of artistic modalities, including performing arts (such as dance, drama, and music) and visual arts (encompassing design and crafts). The primary objective of Creative Arts is to impart foundational knowledge and aptitudes in the arts to learners, nurturing their capacity for creativity, imagination, and appreciation of aesthetic endeavours.² Moriarty and Järlehed define creativity as the process of playfully transforming semiotic resources that transcend current social and material limitations, with the aim of reshaping social meanings, relationships, and structures.³ This process also uncovers specific tensions and ideological stances. Thus, creativity is primarily a means of capturing attention, possessing an innate power to stimulate transformative action. Therefore, Creative Arts paradigms employ a spectrum of mediums within the realm of creative expression, including performance, vocalisation, physical gestures, and the production of artifacts using a variety of visual constituents such as signs, symbols, lines, and drawing techniques. These modalities serve as communicative channels within the artistic domain.

While conventional language typically serves as the primary conduit of human communication, encompassing both oral and written expressions, the linguistic framework within the artistic realm primarily revolves around action, signs, symbols, and other forms of expression. Communication is a fundamental aspect of exchanging or sending information, and the field of Creative Arts embraces a multilingual approach to communication rather than exclusively focusing on a single language. Multilingualism, as defined by Mathe and Motsaathebe, refers to the coexistence and interaction of multiple languages within a community, characterised by tolerance, adjustment, recognition, and accommodation of various indigenous languages, dialects, and accents.⁴ This interaction reflects the diversity of ethnolinguistic groups and can lead to the development of linguistic similarities over time.

This typically includes the knowledge or usage of one or more national languages, as well as the acquisition of additional major languages through formal education. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) establishes that there are 11 official languages in the country.⁵ The government actively encourages the use of these languages, especially those historically marginalised, like the black South African languages. As a result, South Africa is considered a multilingual nation.⁶

Several scholars have conducted research on the use of multilingualism across various disciplines, with some demonstrating an interest in Creative Arts as a language that can assist in articulating content in other subjects. For instance, Jusslin and Høglund examined the pedagogical consequences of incorporating creative dance into poetry reading and writing activities, finding that including dance enhances the understanding and interpretation of poetry.⁷ Similarly, Titing suggests that counselors can improve their services by incorporating creativity and using arts such as drawing and metaphors to complement reality counseling.⁸

Lvovich and Kellman investigate the phenomenon of individuals who possess versatile creativity in multiple languages, examining the correlation between multilingualism and creativity across different languages, cultures, and artistic mediums.⁹ Their research indicates that multilingualism can be considered a manifestation of creativity and acts as a catalyst for visual creativity. Intercultural interactions and

² Department of Basic Education, *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement*. (Pretoria, 2011).

³ Máiréad Moriarty and Johan Järlehed, "Multilingual Creativity and Play in the Semiotic Landscape: An Introduction," *International Journal of Multilingualism* 16, no. 1 (2019): 1–6.

⁴ Limukani Mathe and Gilbert Motsaathebe, "Reconceptualising Multilingualism on African Radio: A Multilingual Accommodation Theory," *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 2024, 1–16.

⁵ South Africa, *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, Act No 108 of 1996* (Pretoria: Government Printers, 1996).

⁶ Abel L Mhlahlo and Thabo Ditsele, "Exploring Multilingualism at the National Department Levels in South Africa Post the Use of Official Languages Act of 2012," *Literator-Journal of Literary Criticism, Comparative Linguistics and Literary Studies* 43, no. 1 (2022): 1819.

⁷ Sofia Jusslin and Heidi Høglund, "Entanglements of Dance/Poetry: Creative Dance in Students' Poetry Reading and Writing," *Research in Dance Education* 22, no. 3 (2021): 250–68.

⁸ Herman Titing, "Integrating Reality Counseling with the Creative Arts as a Counselor's Professional Practice: A Review Literature," *Journal of Professional Teacher Education* 1, no. 1 (2023): 22–31.

⁹ Natasha Lvovich and Steven G Kellman, "Introduction to the Special Issue: Multilingualism, Creativity, and the Arts," 2019.

communication in cultural and educational institutions, socio-cultural and leisure centers, and arts organizations are crucial, as they can overcome language barriers through art, the primary mode of communication in these settings.¹⁰ Aghasafari et al. employed an art integration approach to empower bi/multilingual high school learners, highlighting the benefits of integrating the arts into various academic subjects, especially for multilingual learners, as the arts actively involve participants in observing, connecting, problem-solving, and creating meaning.¹¹

The reliance on oral and written forms of communication in schools can lead to miscommunication and undervaluation of arts courses. The researcher's concerns raised important questions:

- What hinders the use of multilingualism in Creative Arts education?
- How can we improve the use of multilingualism in the classroom?

The researcher's goal is to enhance creativity through non-verbal communication and achieve an equal convergence of verbal and non-verbal communication in classroom instruction. This proposal could enhance inclusivity for learners whose abilities or disabilities might not be catered to if the focus remains solely on verbal communication.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Building on the foundation of the theory of semiotics, Semetsky expanded the concept of semiotics, arguing that signs include phenomena, images, and any notable entities that permeate our everyday lives, filling the world with symbolism.¹² Consequently, images can be considered a form of visual communication. Consistent with earlier research, Yang and Zhang define semiotics as the scientific study of symbols and their role in social communication.¹³ Semiotics focuses on the representation of entities, ideas, and emotions through symbols, as well as the understanding and application of these symbols across diverse cultural and social contexts. It encompasses a variety of symbol systems, including language, writing, images, gestures, and sounds. These scholars' assertions allude to the nature of the Creative Arts, which rely on visual and social forms of communication. Through their interactions with objects, people, signs, images, and symbols, artists—such as musicians, actors, dancers, and designers—socialise and simultaneously visualise communication.

Expanding on the role of society in shaping semiotic meanings, Berger emphasises that society and its codes construct the meanings of signals, highlighting the crucial role of a society in assigning and evolving these meanings over time.¹⁴ The evolution of symbols varies across different historical periods, influenced by artistic advancements. Semiotics plays a crucial role in understanding the significance conveyed in artwork.¹⁵ Through the lens of semiotics, society can view artistic works as intricate symbolic systems, encompassing various forms such as paintings, sculptures, music, and movies. By analysing the components and their interconnections in these symbolic systems, people can uncover the fundamental significance of the work. In visual art, components such as colour, shape, and composition possess distinct symbolic connotations, enabling recipients to interpret and assign meaning to the messages portrayed in such artworks.

Furthering this exploration, Moriarty and Järlehed define a semiotic landscape as a place where language, along with other semiotic resources, plays a role in symbolically shaping space.¹⁶ This perspective expands upon conventional approaches to studying linguistic landscapes by shifting the focus from analysing parallel and written monolingualism to exploring the use of multiple languages and various modes of communication. Moreover, not only do people express, enact, and perceive language through speech and hearing, but also through visual representation. The interaction between written discourse and

¹⁰ Evgeni Velez, Stoyan Denchev, and Myumyun Tahirov, "Challenges for Education of Arts and Culture in Terms of Multilingualism and the Diversity of Cultural Expressions," in *Conference Proceedings. The Future of Education 2016*, 2016.

¹¹ Sahar Aghasafari et al., "Art Integration and Identity: Empowering Bi/Multilingual High School Learners," *Art Education* 75, no. 5 (2022): 32–37.

¹² Inna Semetsky, "Visual Semiotics and Real Events: Exploring the Bricolage of Images," *Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy* 4, no. 2 (2019): 90–110.

¹³ Yanzhe Yang and Lulu Zhang, "The Development Mode of Digital Media Art Based on Semiotic Perspective," *Development* 6, no. 4 (2024): 51–55.

¹⁴ Berger, "Semiotics and Society."

¹⁵ Yang and Zhang, "The Development Mode of Digital Media Art Based on Semiotic Perspective."

¹⁶ Moriarty and Järlehed, "Multilingual Creativity and Play in the Semiotic Landscape: An Introduction."

other discursive modalities, such as visual imagery, nonverbal communication, architecture, and the physical environment, is characterised by a combination of modes and materialities that is both playful and creative.

Helbo argues that the semiotics of the performing arts offer a way to express theories about embodiment, the study of life, and corporeity in the performing arts.¹⁷ In this field, the physical body and its collective existence are the primary mediums. The presence of the spectator justifies the temporary creation of the stage set, as it allows for the observation of details related to the participants' bodily and vocal expressions, movements, and characterisations. However, researchers lacking experience in the performing arts often overlook this aspect. The semiotics of performing arts have developed uniquely, diverging significantly from text- or genre-focused studies. Unlike storytelling or painting, the distinctive feature of theatre is the tangible presence of the human body before it acquires meaning. The physical nature of the items, as well as the mutual understanding between actors and audiences, cause audiences to perceive these bodies and objects differently, despite their familiarity with everyday life. In the performing arts, this mutual understanding and embodiment of performance are critical for conveying meaning.

Music, too, serves as a potent medium of semiotic expression. Ramdani and Sakina explore the signifier and the signified in song lyrics, emphasising that music lyrics are spoken symbols created by humans.¹⁸ They highlight that song lyrics often carry an implied or alternative meaning that the performer seeks to convey. An author composes song lyrics to effectively express the intended message, capturing the composer's emotions and thoughts on topics such as love, jealousy, and peace. These lyrics serve as a powerful means of communication, conveying concepts and themes while evoking vivid images through language rich in connotations, graphical strength, and sensual beauty. According to Saussure's dyadic tradition, a sign consists of two parts: the signifier and the signified, indicating that it has two sides.¹⁹ Any human or animal sound that expresses, declares, and conveys specific concepts and meanings can be considered language. This framework helps to understand how song lyrics, as spoken symbols, function to communicate complex emotions and ideas.

The perspectives of these scholars support the argument that Creative Arts, such as music, dance, drama, and visual arts, express themselves through various forms of visual and social communication, including actions, symbols, signs, images, and voice projection. Therefore, theoretical instruction alone is inadequate for teaching the Creative Arts. The essence of the Creative Arts is more about signals than text, but textual context helps observers interpret the signal language according to their own understanding. Thus, multilingualism is essential in teaching Creative Arts to avoid the ambiguity of content viewed only from a monolingual perspective. This combination of multiple languages is necessary, prompting the researcher to explore ways to enhance creativity in the Creative Arts through multilingualism.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The foundation of this study is based on Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of semiotics, which Sørensen and Thellefsen consider a seminal work in the field.²⁰ Although Saussure primarily wrote about linguistics, his abstract concepts and principles have significantly influenced various disciplines such as philosophy, psychology, sociology, anthropology, literary studies, and semiotics. Numerous scholars have advanced their understanding of Saussure's contributions to semiotics, including Berger, Sørensen and Thellefsen.²¹ Among these scholars are Charles Sanders Peirce, regarded as a founding figure with his trichotomy for explaining signs, and Umberto Eco. This article will specifically focus on Saussure's dichotomy and Peirce's categorisation of signs.

¹⁷ André Helbo, "Semiotics and Performing Arts: Contemporary Issues," *Social Semiotics* 26, no. 4 (2016): 341–50.

¹⁸ Sandy Muhammad Ramdani and R Myrna Nur Sakinah, "Exploring The Signified and Signifier in Song Lyrics through A Saussurean Semiotics Lens," *JETLEE: Journal of English Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature* 3, no. 2 (2023): 50–60.

¹⁹ Anne Frances Jaensch Hellwig, "Digital, Multimodal Composition in English for Architects and Civil Engineers Programs: Implications for Theory and Practice in Educational Semiotics," 2023.

²⁰ Bent Sørensen and Torkild Thellefsen, "Ferdinand de Saussure in Contemporary Semiotics," *Language and Semiotic Studies* 8, no. 1 (2022): 1–5.

²¹ Arthur Asa Berger, "Semiotics and Society," *Society* 51 (2014): 22–26; Sørensen and Thellefsen, "Ferdinand de Saussure in Contemporary Semiotics."

Semiotics, or semiology, as defined by Thellefsen, is a multidisciplinary domain that explores the process of creating and transmitting meaning through signs and symbols.²² Thellefsen further distinguishes the two founders' perspectives of semiotics, highlighting that Peirce's semiotics is based on philosophical realism and has a fundamentally universalist nature. However, it is also characterised by its exploratory nature and real openness, acknowledging that signs and their relationships are dynamic and constantly influenced by their context and the interpretative processes of individuals or social groups. Saussure's semiotics, derived from a language perspective, emphasises the interconnected components of sign systems. Berger elaborates that semiotics is the rigorous examination of signs, which encompass every entity capable of representing or symbolizing another entity.²³ According to Berger, a sign is any object or notion that serves as a meaningful substitute for something else. He expands on this by referencing Umberto Eco's theories, asserting that semiotics encompasses all elements that could be considered signs. In summary, signs serve as a means of communication, enabling recipients to interpret the messages conveyed by signs according to their own understanding.

METHODOLOGY

The transformational paradigm, a research framework that specifically examines the experiences of marginalised communities, informed this study. This paradigm involves examining unequal distributions of power that result in the exclusion of certain groups and linking research discoveries to efforts aimed at diminishing inequalities.²⁴ According to Omodan and Addam, the transformational paradigm enables researchers to perceive knowledge and its growth as a social construct, influenced by individualism, personal traits, and community norms.²⁵ Phelps concurs with Omodan and Addam's view, noting that transformative researchers use the paradigm as a tool to encourage innovation and acknowledge failure as an important aspect of creating an environment for collaborative knowledge construction.²⁶ In this context, researchers and participants recognise that social and historical factors shape knowledge. This approach is appropriate for teaching in a classroom setting because the objective of education is to cultivate analytical thinking and enable individuals to become knowledgeable and actively involved members of society. Thus, the paradigm supports the researcher's claim that incorporating multilingualism into Creative Arts training can enhance creativity.

The study employed a qualitative participatory research (PR) design to validate the appropriateness of using the transformative paradigm as a framework. Vaughn and Jacquez assert that participatory research (PR) necessitates the active participation of individuals who may lack formal research training, yet belong to or represent the studied groups, including stakeholders, community members, constituents, and end-users.²⁷ This collaboration aims to directly engage those affected by the issue being studied, with the goal of taking action or bringing about change. Cornish et al. state that participatory action research (PAR) typically entails a cooperative effort between a community that has personal experience with a social problem and academic researchers, usually affiliated with universities, who provide pertinent expertise, abilities, resources, and connections.²⁸

In this study, the researcher, who is also a lecturer, observed the student teacher's Creative Arts instruction and collected data during the first lesson from interactions between the student teacher and the learners against the lesson topic. Following the lesson presentation, the lecturer provided feedback to the student teacher on the lesson's outcomes and recommended improvements for the next lesson. The researcher intentionally selected ten eighth-grade learners to participate in a focus group in collaboration with the student teacher. The researcher selected this group for pilot testing to make the empowerment attempt easier to manage and to allow for more in-depth observation, interaction, and data collection,

²² Sørensen and Thellefsen, "Ferdinand de Saussure in Contemporary Semiotics."

²³ Berger, "Semiotics and Society."

²⁴ Karen Moran Jackson et al., "Using the Transformative Paradigm to Conduct a Mixed Methods Needs Assessment of a Marginalized Community: Methodological Lessons and Implications," *Evaluation and Program Planning* 66 (2018): 111–19.

²⁵ Bunmi Isaiyah Omodan and Billey Addam, "Analysis of Transformational Teaching as a Philosophical Foundation for Effective Classrooms," *Journal of Curriculum Studies Research* 4, no. 2 (2022): 15–29.

²⁶ Johanna L. Phelps, "The Transformative Paradigm: Equipping Technical Communication Researchers for Socially Just Work," *Technical Communication Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (April 3, 2021): 204–15, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2020.1803412>.

²⁷ Lisa M Vaughn and Farrah Jacquez, "Participatory Research Methods—Choice Points in the Research Process," *Journal of Participatory Research Methods* 1, no. 1 (2020).

²⁸ Flora Cornish et al., "Participatory Action Research," *Nature Reviews Methods Primers* 3, no. 1 (2023): 34.

ensuring higher-quality data. The aim was to collaborate with the student teacher to enhance the lesson by encouraging learners to share their meaningful observations during the lesson.

The researcher revised the lesson to cover the same topic using visual communication methods such as pictures, signs, and symbols, allowing learners to interpret and understand their observations. The researcher observed and collected data during the second lesson presentation. Afterward, the learners discussed their experiences from both lessons to assess any improvements. The researcher employed a narrative approach to analyse the data, documenting their observations and clarifying the learners' interpretations of the signs used in the second lesson.²⁹ This method allowed for an exploration of participants' responses through their narratives. The data was examined vertically, focusing on individual narratives, identifying similarities, and rewriting the findings. The analysis also considered the influence of social discourses on the texts, grouping narratives by common themes to construct the insights and thoughts of both the researcher and the participants. Participants were selected voluntarily, giving them the option to withdraw from the group if desired. They clarified ethical concerns and voluntarily obtained participants' consent to participate in the research session.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The analysis and discussion of the data acquired through observations and narratives of learners' experiences throughout the lesson presentation relied on the developing themes discovered from these observations and narratives. The purpose of this analysis is to respond to the research questions.

Factors affecting the use of multilingualism in Creative Arts instruction

1. A lack of training and linguistic dominance

The training and professional development opportunities available to teachers for properly implementing multilingual instruction are of utmost importance. Teachers who have had extensive training are more inclined to employ multilingual methodologies.³⁰ Instead of relying on visual aids, teaching methods such as code-switching and translanguaging restricted the use of multilingualism. Consequently, the assessment methodologies fail to account for the variations in language.

In the first lesson on the basic elements of visual arts, a student teacher employed a didactic approach. The lesson delivery involved the teacher reading from a textbook and transcribing its contents onto the chalkboard while explaining the elements of the visual arts. The learners interpreted some concepts in their mother tongue, but the overall teaching strategy encouraged rote learning, which the current curriculum discourages.³¹ The curriculum advocates for an active and critical approach to learning.

This scenario highlights a common issue faced by teachers, particularly those in training, who often rely heavily on the dominant language of instruction. This reliance stems from the misconception that the official language of instruction must always be used, permitting the use of the mother tongue only to explain complex topics. Inexperienced teachers often default to code-switching as a means to address the needs of multilingual learners, limiting the use of multilingualism to spoken and written communication only. This approach can hinder the development of deeper comprehension and critical thinking skills among learners.

2. Lack of resources and limited preparedness

The lack of tools such as visual aids and a suitable Creative Arts teaching setting presented difficulties in delivering the instruction. The limited preparedness of teachers is another significant factor affecting the use of multilingualism in Creative Arts instruction. Modern teachers often express dissatisfaction with the lack of sufficient instructional materials. When teachers rely heavily on textbooks without thorough preparation, they tend to use a single teaching method, regardless of its effectiveness for their learners. This lack of preparedness can deprive learners of opportunities to develop creative and critical thinking skills, as the lesson may not accommodate diverse learning styles, such as auditory, visual, and

²⁹ Milissa Bradley and Virginia Montero-Hernandez, "Examining the Artistic Voices of Community College Dance Students Using a Narrative Inquiry Approach," *Journal of Dance Education*, 2024, 1–12.

³⁰ Laura Kirss et al., "School Effectiveness in Multilingual Education: A Review of Success Factors," *Education Sciences* 11, no. 5 (2021): 193.

³¹ Department of Basic Education, *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement*, 4.

kinaesthetic. If Creative Arts teachers fail to implement innovative, multilingual teaching methods, they miss the essence of the subject and its educational purpose. Effective lesson planning should address the varied abilities of all learners, ensuring a more inclusive and engaging learning experience.

3. Insufficient instructional time

Due to time constraints, the teacher resorted to using the prevailing language in the classroom rather than incorporating multilingual methods of instruction. Wanting to ensure learners understood the material, the teacher adopted simpler methods to cover more content quickly. Although interactive and participatory methods are beneficial for teaching multiple languages, they require more time, resulting in fewer opportunities for such activities. To save time, the teacher opted for faster, monolingual assessments, reducing the emphasis on multilingualism. Additionally, time limitations forced teachers to prioritise certain areas over others, often at the expense of multilingual instruction.

Enhancing the use of semiotic multilingualism in Creative Arts instruction

The researcher designed a second lesson presentation, using multilingual teaching methods aimed at fostering creativity, to enhance the use of multilingualism in Creative Arts instruction. This lesson utilised Berger's study of signals in semiotics, employing a semiotic method of teaching. The teacher presented an image to the class and instructed learners to closely observe and describe their findings. During this brainstorming session, learners generated ideas based on their observations, assigning significance to various elements such as colour, line, shape, and space. The teacher facilitated discussions, guiding learners to draw their own conclusions and clarify concepts by examining the artwork. This method captivated the learners and ensured full participation. The semiotic method proved to be highly effective for Creative Arts instruction, as it catered to all learning styles. Visual learners interpreted the images; auditory learners benefited from spoken explanations; and kinaesthetic learners engaged physically by interacting with the pictures.³² This method allowed learners to independently explore and unpack the components of the visual arts, with the teacher acting as a facilitator.

Strategies for Implementing Semiotic Multilingualism

Enhancing the use of semiotic multilingualism in Creative Arts instruction involves incorporating diverse sign systems and languages to enrich communication, interpretation, and expression within the arts. The following strategies can effectively integrate semiotics, the study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation, into multilingual education.

1. Professional Development for Teachers and Learners

Teachers should receive training in semiotic multilingualism and its application in Creative Arts instruction through workshops, seminars, and collaborative planning sessions. All schools should establish a centralised repository for educational materials and exemplary methods pertaining to semiotic multilingualism in the arts, enabling teachers to easily retrieve and exchange resources. Teachers need to incorporate symbols, icons, and visual representations from diverse languages and cultures into their lesson presentations. This will enable learners to produce artworks that incorporate different alphabets, calligraphy techniques, and culturally relevant symbols. Learners will receive instruction on how to analyse and interpret a variety of signs and symbols from various languages and cultures. Create assessment criteria that acknowledge the use of various semiotic components in learners' artwork, appreciating their skill in integrating numerous sign systems. Learners must consider their use of semiotic multilingualism in their artwork, examining the ways in which diverse symbols and languages influenced their creative process and conveyed their message.

2. Multilingual exhibitions and multimedia projects

Create educational exhibits in classrooms that incorporate multilingual murals, posters, and interactive installations, encouraging viewers to interact with many languages and semiotic systems. It is advisable

³² Laura Brass and Jennifer Jenson, "Drawing and Play as Windows into a Child's Multimodal Meaning-Making Development during COVID-19," *Language and Literacy* 25, no. 2 (2023): 28–56.

to motivate learners to utilise multimedia tools in order to combine text, images, sounds, and videos from other languages and cultures.³³ This will enable them to produce digital collages or video art that accurately depict their experiences in numerous languages. Teachers should provide interactive art pieces that let learners use their devices to scan specific sections of an artwork, thereby uncovering multilingual content, explanations, or narratives. This can facilitate reciprocal acquisition and admiration for diverse semiotic systems.

3. Multilingual performance and storytelling

Encourage learners to create and perform plays that incorporate dialogues, scripts, and narratives in multiple languages, using symbolic gestures and body language to enhance understanding. Organise storytelling sessions where learners share stories from their cultures using a mix of languages and symbolic elements, such as traditional attire, musical instruments, and visual aids.³⁴

Discussion Summary

Multilingualism in this context encompassed not only verbal and written communication but also non-verbal forms such as gestures, visuals, and symbols. These elements conveyed messages more effectively than words alone, engaging learners more actively than the traditional didactic method. The learners expressed a clear preference for this interactive and inclusive teaching method, which contrasted sharply with the passive and confusing nature of the first method. Enhancing multilingualism in Creative Arts instruction requires a shift from traditional, rote-learning strategies to more interactive, student-centred methods. By incorporating semiotic methods and accommodating diverse learning styles, teachers can create a more engaging and effective learning environment that fosters creativity and critical thinking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the realm of teaching the creative arts, the presence of creativity is critical. Creativity is the capacity to produce novel ideas and concepts through imaginative and pioneering cognitive processes. A prospective Creative Arts teacher should showcase extraordinary ingenuity and display the capacity to adapt to environments with restricted resources. Students should participate in creative arts activities that highlight the universal and diverse nature of human expression, incorporating other languages as forms of learning. By analysing how various cultures employ colours, shapes, and motifs in their projects, students can enhance their understanding of semiotics and the construction of meaning across languages and societies. Additionally, further inquiry is required to explore teachers' experiences with implementing the semiotic multilingual teaching method.

CONCLUSION

The study aimed to improve Creative Arts instruction by including multilingualism. The analysis of the data revealed that the dominance of a particular language and a lack of readiness are obstacles to the effective use of multilingualism in classroom instruction. However, the semiotic method in teaching has shown that the presence of multiple languages in the classroom leads to positive outcomes. This is because learners can analyse and understand signs, images, symbols, behaviours, and other elements, thereby assigning meaning to their observations. Creative Arts teachers should employ innovative teaching methods and, if necessary, diligently collect abandoned resources that may otherwise be considered worthless. They can transform these materials into valuable products with resourcefulness.

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