

Translanguaging and Social Justice: The Stance of the Minority Languages through the Lens of the Lesotho Curriculum Policy



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ABSTRACT

Translanguaging refers to both the discourse practices of bilinguals, as well as to pedagogical practices that use the entire linguistic repertoire of bilingual students flexibly in order to teach rigorous content and develop language practices for academic use. Translanguaging can be used as an effective tool in the teaching of all subjects in the classroom of students of different languages. This study sought to assess the stance of the minority languages through the lens of the Lesotho curriculum policy focusing on Translanguaging and social justice. The study engaged a qualitative research method where the issue of translanguaging will be explained using words. Based on the findings of this study, it was discovered that the policy recognises only Sesotho and English as languages of instruction and official languages. Also, it was found that the policy is very silent about roles that can be played by minority languages thus disregarding them even though it appears to be supporting them. Thus, it is concluded that the Lesotho allows social inequality and no translanguaging thus a problem for the education and learning of the minority language speakers. It recommends that translanguaging be used in all grades in all subjects because this will help students understand complex concepts. Moreover, Sesotho should not be used as the only language when code-switching from English to other languages. This study contributes more insight into the development and review of CAP for incorporation of minority languages.

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INTRODUCTION

Translanguaging is a dynamic linguistic practice where multilingual individuals fluidly and strategically draw from their entire language repertoire to communicate, blending languages to convey meaning. This concept challenges traditional language boundaries, emphasizing the incorrectness of languages rather than viewing them as isolated entities. Translanguaging alleviates language boundaries and sees multilingual users' linguistic practices as original and creative.¹ It further recognizes the richness that arises when people engage in seamless language mixing, promoting a more inclusive understanding of language use as communication. This approach is particularly significant in multicultural and

¹ Jasone Cenoz, "Translanguaging in School Contexts: International Perspectives," *Journal of Language, Identity & Education* 16, no. 4 (2017): 193–98.

multilingual contexts, fostering effective communication and cultural exchange. It happens in different milieus and one of those is the educational one.

Translanguaging in education refers to the intentional and purposeful use of multiple languages as a pedagogical strategy. It recognizes and leverages students' linguistic diversity as an asset rather than a hindrance. When bilingual individuals are translanguaging, they do not think and use each language independently; instead, they employ a bilingual idiolect, which includes the integrated use of linguistic resources unique to their bilingual status.² In this approach, teachers encourage students to use their entire language repertoire to comprehend and express ideas, creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Against this background, it becomes clear that translanguaging fosters deeper understanding, as students can bridge concepts between languages, aiding in acquiring new knowledge. This approach is particularly beneficial for multilingual learners, promoting linguistic and cognitive flexibility while validating students' cultural and linguistic identities within educational settings.

Translanguaging intersects with social justice in education by advocating for linguistic equity and recognizing the power dynamics embedded in language use. Embracing Translanguaging in education aligns with social justice principles by valuing and validating diverse linguistic backgrounds. This approach challenges linguistic discrimination and promotes inclusivity, allowing individuals to express themselves authentically.

Translanguaging also represents an approach to language pedagogy that acknowledges and leverages students' diverse and dynamic language practices in teaching and learning by accepting and incorporating students' multiple languages.³ Needless to say, supports equitable access to education, ensuring that linguistic diversity is not a barrier to academic success. This practice fosters a more democratic learning environment, empowering students to engage with content in ways that resonate with their linguistic and cultural experiences. In essence, Translanguaging in education contributes to social justice by dismantling language-related inequalities, promoting cultural respect, and fostering an inclusive educational background. According to Marrero-Colón translanguaging as pedagogy means that the teacher is aware that the linguistic capabilities of the students go much further than classroom language practices.⁴

It recognizes and leverages students' linguistic diversity as an asset rather than a hindrance. In this approach, educators encourage students to use their entire language repertoire to comprehend and express ideas, creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Translanguaging fosters deeper understanding, as students can bridge concepts between languages, aiding in the acquisition of new knowledge. This approach is particularly beneficial for multilingual learners, promoting linguistic and cognitive flexibility while validating students' cultural and linguistic identities within the educational setting.

The place of major and minor languages in the curriculum depends on the educational policies and goals of a specific region or country. On the one hand, a country's major language(s) often serve as the primary medium of instruction. This is more often than not the language of wider communication, such as English, French, or Spanish. Major languages also play a significant role in teaching core subjects like Mathematics, Science, and Social studies. On the other hand, educational policies may recognize the importance of including and preserving minor languages in the curriculum. This inclusion could be in the form of language courses or incorporating these languages into specific subjects. Moreover, integrating minor languages helps celebrate cultural diversity and ensures that linguistic heritage is not lost.

Additionally, some regions adopt a Translanguaging approach, allowing students to use multiple languages flexibly in the learning process. This is especially relevant in multilingual settings. This is supported by research. Lesupi highlights that it is vital for children to get an education in their mother language since it ensures positive outcomes.⁵ In this context, countries such as Ghana, South Africa,

² W. Li, "Translanguaging as a Practical Theory of Language: Implications for Language Learning and Research," *Proceedings at the Faculty of Humanities Distinguished Lecture Series. The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hung Hom, Hong Kong*, 2018.

³ Sara Vogel and Ofelia García, "Translanguaging," 2017.

⁴ M. Marrero-Colón, "Translanguaging: Theory, Concept, Practice, Stance... or All of the Above," *Center for Applied Linguistics*. [https://www. Cal. Org/Wp-Content/Uploads/2022/05, 2021](https://www.cal.org/Wp-Content/Uploads/2022/05, 2021).

⁵ Edith Matseliso Lesupi, "Practitioners' Experiences in Using Sesotho as Medium of Instruction in Grade R Classes in Qwaqwa," 2015.

Malaysia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Lesotho, support the implementation of mother-tongue education policies in early grades (6–8 years of age) in schools.⁶ In areas with multiple major languages, bilingual or multilingual education models might be implemented to ensure that students are proficient in more than one language. The specific approach to the sociolinguistic context, educational goals, and policies of the region. It is common for major languages to have a prominent place, but recognizing and integrating minor languages contributes to a more inclusive and culturally rich education system. Lesotho has a unique linguistic landscape that influences the language situation in schools.

Education and languages, irrespective of being major or minor, promote equity and justice by addressing the root causes of inequality and working towards creating an all-round society that is inclusive. They also work to foster a commitment to actively challenging and dismantling ethnic and racial disparities in all their forms, both within educational institutions and in society at large. Lesotho is a country that is home to several minority communities. Evidence from research in Lesotho indicates that the education system is exclusionary.⁷ Matlosa demonstrated that 10% of Lesotho's people belong to minority groups such as Batlokoa, Basia, Bataung, Matebele, Bathepu, and Baphuthi, which indicates the existence of minority languages such as Setlokoa, Setebele, Sephuthi, and Sethepu in the country.⁸ Matlosa emphasises that the Lesotho constitution of 1993 does not address the minority languages in Lesotho.⁹ Matsoso states that minority languages in Lesotho are consistently overlooked, leading to the denial of linguistic rights for its speakers.¹⁰ As a result, these minority languages are only used at home. Kometsi notes that Lesotho, despite being perceived as a homogeneous country, has four native languages.¹¹ The languages are Sesotho, isiPhuthi, isiXhosa, isiNdebele, and Sign Language. Except for Sesotho, no other indigenous languages are utilised as a medium of instruction in schools, as stated by Kometsi.¹² It is against this background that this study is being conducted, to find the place of translanguaging and social justice by determining the stance of the minority languages through the lens of the Lesotho curriculum Policy. This is with the intention of seeing the extent to which linguistic social justice is depicted in the CAP and assessing the degree to which the policy is flexible and permeable for translanguaging in the Lesotho education system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Linguistic Situation in Lesotho

Lesotho has a multilingual context, with Sesotho and English being the two official languages. The language situation in Lesotho schools reflects this linguistic diversity. In the early years of primary education, Sesotho is often the primary medium of instruction even though other languages in Lesotho are regarded as minor. This situation is aggravated by some primary schools, commonly known as the English medium schools, which prefer the use of English as a medium of instruction for lower grades despite the assertion by CAP as stated above.¹³ The Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho stipulates that every student be taught in their first language.¹⁴ This allows students to learn foundational concepts in a language familiar to them. However, Kolobe and Matsoso indicate that if Lesotho persistently disregards the existence of minority languages as their home language to other Basotho, this means that students from such linguistic backgrounds will continue to be wrongly taught and assessed in

⁶ Arone C. Koloti and Thuthukile Jita, "Grade R Teachers' Experiences with the Implementation of the Mother-Tongue-Instruction Policy for Pre-Reading Skills in Lesotho," *South African Journal of Childhood Education* 11, no. 1 (September 28, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v11i1.957>.

⁷ Litšepiso Matlosa, "The Role and Place of Sign Language in the Lesotho Education Context: Some Sociolinguistic Implications" (University of the Witwatersrand, 2009); Letzadzo Kometsi, "Legal Protection of Minority Languages in Lesotho: The Case of SiPhuthi Language of EbaPhuthi," *Lesotho Law Journal* 21, no. 1 (2014): 117–35.

⁸ Matlosa, "The Role and Place of Sign Language in the Lesotho Education Context: Some Sociolinguistic Implications."

⁹ Matlosa, "The Role and Place of Sign Language in the Lesotho Education Context: Some Sociolinguistic Implications."

¹⁰ Lifelile Matsoso, "The Role of Traditional Knowledge in Acquisition of Proficiency in Academic English by Students in a Higher Education Institution" (2012).

¹¹ Kometsi, "Legal Protection of Minority Languages in Lesotho: The Case of SiPhuthi Language of EbaPhuthi."

¹² Kometsi, "Legal Protection of Minority Languages in Lesotho: The Case of SiPhuthi Language of EbaPhuthi."

¹³ Kananelo Sylvester Moea, "Problems Faced by Lesotho Piloting High School Teachers in Implementing the 2009 Curriculum and Assessment Policy," *Merit Research Journal of Education and Review* 10, no. 4 (2022): 69–73.

¹⁴ Ministry of Education and Training, "Curriculum and Assessment Policy: Education for Individual and Social Development" (MoET Maseru, 2009).

foreign languages; hence, their educational development is underprivileged.¹⁵ As students progress through the grades, there is typically a gradual shift towards English as the medium of instruction, especially in upper primary and secondary education.¹⁶ Also, the language policy in Lesotho's education system has undergone changes to address challenges related to language proficiency and educational outcomes.¹⁷ The goal is often to strike a balance between promoting proficiency in English, which is essential for broader communication, and maintaining the cultural and linguistic identity through Sesotho.

Lesotho has implemented bilingual education models, recognizing the importance of Sesotho and English in the learning process. Efforts are made to enhance Sesotho's literacy skills, ensuring that students are proficient in their native language while acquiring competence in English.¹⁸ Sesotho is not only the means of communication but also holds cultural significance; this does not only apply to Sesotho only, but even to other minority languages in Lesotho. Efforts are made to incorporate cultural elements and local context in the education system.¹⁹ Understanding and navigating this bilingual/multilingual landscape is crucial for providing an inclusive education that respects Lesotho's linguistic and cultural diversity. Given the multilingual context, there may be translanguaging instances where students draw on their multilingual repertoires to understand and express ideas. This is particularly relevant for students who speak languages other than Sesotho or English at home.

Social Justice in Language in Education

Social justice in language scenarios within education is about ensuring fairness, equity, and inclusivity in language practices. Promoting social justice involves recognizing and valuing the linguistic diversity present among students. This includes both major and minor languages spoken within the community. It is establishing inclusive language policies that consider the linguistic backgrounds of students. This may involve using students' home language as a medium of instruction, especially in the early years of education, and ensuring that all students have access to resources for learning languages, regardless of their linguistic background. This includes materials in various languages and support for students learning additional languages.

Addressing any discrimination based on language, whether related to accent, proficiency or the use of non-majority languages, Social justice principles call for an environment where linguistic diversity is celebrated and respected. Implementing programs that support bilingual or multilingual education allows students to develop proficiency in multiple languages. This can empower students and open opportunities. It involves local communities in decision-making processes related to language policies in education. This ensures that the perspectives and needs of different linguistic communities are considered. Recognizing the role of language in preserving cultural identities. Social justice in language education involves balancing fostering proficiency in global languages and preserving local cultural and linguistic heritage. Ensuring that assessment practices are fair and consider the linguistic diversity of students. This might involve accommodations for students whose first language is not the assessment language. In essence, social justice in language scenarios within education is about creating an inclusive and equitable environment where all students, regardless of their linguistic background, have equal opportunities for learning and success.

Translanguaging Theory

García defines translanguaging as 'multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage to make sense of their bilingual worlds', additionally García and Li interpret translanguaging as the different habits multilingual speakers employ, produce, and interpret various types of linguistic signs to interconnect

¹⁵ Mabileba Kolobe and Lifelile Matsoso, "Effects of Language Status on Assessment and Educational Development of Basotho Learners from Minority Languages' Backgrounds.," *International Journal of Language Education* 4, no. 3 (2020): 378–88.

¹⁶ Ntsoaki Mphomeli, "Minority Languages' Influence on Teaching and Learning of English in Public Primary Schools" (National University of Lesotho, 2022).

¹⁷ Moea, "Problems Faced by Lesotho Piloting High School Teachers in Implementing the 2009 Curriculum and Assessment Policy"; Mochaeka Raselimo and Mahao Mahao, "The Lesotho Curriculum and Assessment Policy: Opportunities and Threats," *South African Journal of Education* 35, no. 1 (2015): 1–12.

¹⁸ Lihotetso Gloria Matee et al., "Exclusion of Ethnic and Other Minority Language Nationals in Education: A Case of Lesotho's Language in Education Policy," 2023.

¹⁹ Ministry of Education and Training, "Curriculum and Assessment Policy: Education for Individual and Social Development."

across contexts and participants and perform their different subjectivities.²⁰ On the other hand, Otheguy et al. say that the concern of translanguaging inquiry and practice, then, is to disturb the hegemonic types of national, academic, or standardized languages to open potentials for the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic collection without regard for a watchful observance to the socially and politically demarcated boundaries of named languages.²¹ Contrarily, Sanchez designate that translanguaging theory implies that all connotation-making practices are not additive— languages are not practiced on discrete parallel tracks, instead, they are inherently dynamic, meaning languages are co-constitutive of each other.²² This theory is used in this paper because different languages are supposed to be used in lower grades in Lesotho, but some are ignored, and only Sesotho speakers are privileged. The theory shows how bilingual and multilingual educators can use different languages in a classroom setting.

Critical Race Theory

Delgado and Stefancic mention that the Critical Race Theory (CRT) is used by activists and scholars engaged in studying and transforming the relationship between race, racism, and power.²³ They further explain that Critical race theorists use this theory in education to understand school discipline and hierarchy, tracking, controversies over curriculum and history, and IQ and accomplishment testing. This paper uses this theory to address issues that appear in the curriculum but are not attended to or addressed as they appear in the school curriculum, such as the fact that all students need to be taught in their mother tongue from grade one to three. Still, some students are not taught in their mother tongue, whereas some are privileged regarding mother tongue usage at schools in Lesotho but are disadvantaged.

METHODOLOGY

Document analysis of the Lesotho CAP framework was undertaken by the researchers, where the issue of language policy was discussed. This policy document was examined based on three factors: context, language, and implications, as Cardno avers.²⁴ This paper employed a qualitative approach to describe how the Lesotho language Policy involves other languages rather than the two official languages (Sesotho and English) in teaching. The qualitative approach was essential in this research study since it concentrated on gathering and analysing verbal (spoken or written) and textual data by examining the curriculum policy.²⁵ This approach helped interpret or explain how translanguaging can be used in an educational setting granting permission for minority languages to diffuse across the classroom teaching.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

According to CAP, the language policy reads:

*The framework recognises the pluralism of the Basotho nation and the existence of other languages besides the two languages of Sesotho and English. In that regard, the framework boldly asserts that the mother tongue will be used as a medium of instruction up to class three (resources permitting), while English will be taught as a subject at this level and other levels. It goes further to indicate that sign language shall also form part of the new language policy.*²⁶

According to the above language policy statement, the policy recognizes the existence of other languages in Lesotho. This aligns with the Translanguaging theory that language is a social practice shaped by social interactions and contexts, thus emphasising the importance of using language in

²⁰ Ofelia García, *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective* (John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 45; Ofelia García and Wei Li, "Translanguaging: Language, Education, and Bilingualism," *New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan* 10 (2014): 9781137385765.

²¹ Ricardo Otheguy, Ofelia García, and Wallis Reid, "Clarifying Translanguaging and Deconstructing Named Languages: A Perspective from Linguistics," *Applied Linguistics Review* 6, no. 3 (September 1, 2015): 281–307, <https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2015-0014>.

²² Maite T Sánchez, "Translanguaging in Dual Language Bilingual Education in the United States: Framings, Research, and Possibilities," in *The Handbook of Dual Language Bilingual Education* (Routledge, 2023), 414–43.

²³ Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, vol. 87 (NyU press, 2023).

²⁴ Carol Cardno, "Policy Document Analysis: A Practical Educational Leadership Tool and a Qualitative Research Method.," *Educational Administration: Theory & Practice* 24, no. 4 (2018): 623–40.

²⁵ Raselimo and Mahao, "The Lesotho Curriculum and Assessment Policy: Opportunities and Threats."

²⁶ Ministry of Education and Training, "Curriculum and Assessment Policy: Education for Individual and Social Development," vii.

authentic and meaningful ways.²⁷ However, this is adumbrated not detailed because the languages in question are not mentioned. Therefore, there is a loud silence about the languages referred to and depicts disallowance to use a repertoire of languages in existence in Lesotho. Therefore, translanguaging is not possible. This lack of recognition leaves out an ambiguous aftertaste, not knowing which languages are recognised and it brings about social disparity in education. These findings are congruent with the findings of the study conducted by Matee et al.²⁸ Addressing linguistic disparity is essential for establishing an inclusive education system that guarantees all students have equitable opportunities to succeed academically. One principle of Critical Race Theory is to promote equity and justice by addressing the underlying reasons for inequality and striving to build a more inclusive and fair society.²⁹ In tandem, the education system in Lesotho is expected to incorporate the learning requirements of ethnic minority languages based on the information provided which is shockingly not the case. In congruence with this, Translanguaging theory highlights the need to allow teachers to leverage students' versatile and flexible language skills and modes of communication.³⁰ Matee et al. also state that there is still uncertainty on which mother tongue should be used, despite MOET's declaration in 2009.³¹ It is unsurprising that over a decade later UNICEF continues to doubt the effectiveness of using the mother tongue in education from Grade 1 to 3.³² This reveals that only two languages are used in class in an attempt to translanguange and this attempt unfortunately leaves those who are not native of Sesotho out thus bringing social inequality and rigidity of the process of translanguaging because it is neanderthal. One lingering question is whether the lack of specification of the specific mother tongue is the reason for the unanswered query.

It is important to note that only Sesotho and English are accepted as the official languages, while the other mentioned languages are not included in the line '...besides the two languages...' However, learners studying these languages do not have the opportunity to use their languages like Sesotho-speaking learners in lower classes do. The results are consistent with the research conducted by Kolobe and Matsoso.³³ The study showed that both teachers and students emphasised the importance of state governance institutions acknowledging and upholding human rights during strategy planning and implementation. The participants in Kolobe and Matsoso's study emphasised the freedom to freely utilise one's language and culture without experiencing discrimination or being classified as an outcast.³⁴ The ease of translanguaging in a classroom may be eased by allowing all the languages of the learners in a classroom to be used in their education. According to Kolobe and Matsoso, a teacher participant in their study stated that learners can be underestimated since minority languages are not recognised.³⁵ She demonstrated that one would perceive them as foolish due to their unconventional use of Sesotho, as they do not distinguish between word usages. For instance, when one summons a Xhosa student, upon their arrival, they will simply respond, 'I am here, what do you need?' From a Mosotho perspective, the usage of words in their culture may come out as disrespectful. This underestimation comes as a result of the CAP that does not provide the minority languages space in the teaching and learning milieus thus bringing misunderstandings and impeding proper education. It is important to acknowledge and appreciate the cultural backgrounds and experiences of students, as advocated by Critical Race Theory. This should be integrated into the curriculum and teaching methods to create a more inclusive and meaningful education

²⁷ Yang Liu and Fan Fang, "Translanguaging Theory and Practice: How Stakeholders Perceive Translanguaging as a Practical Theory of Language," *RELC Journal* 53, no. 2 (2022): 391–99.

²⁸ Matee et al., "Exclusion of Ethnic and Other Minority Language Nationals in Education: A Case of Lesotho's Language in Education Policy."

²⁹ María C Ledesma and Dolores Calderón, "Critical Race Theory in Education: A Review of Past Literature and a Look to the Future," *Qualitative Inquiry* 21, no. 3 (2015): 206–22.

³⁰ Liu and Fang, "Translanguaging Theory and Practice: How Stakeholders Perceive Translanguaging as a Practical Theory of Language."

³¹ Matee et al., "Exclusion of Ethnic and Other Minority Language Nationals in Education: A Case of Lesotho's Language in Education Policy."

³² UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children: A Fair Chance for Every Child*, 2016.

³³ Kolobe and Matsoso, "Effects of Language Status on Assessment and Educational Development of Basotho Learners from Minority Languages' Backgrounds."

³⁴ Kolobe and Matsoso, "Effects of Language Status on Assessment and Educational Development of Basotho Learners from Minority Languages' Backgrounds."

³⁵ Kolobe and Matsoso, "Effects of Language Status on Assessment and Educational Development of Basotho Learners from Minority Languages' Backgrounds."

for all students, regardless of their backgrounds which alarmingly, CAP in Lesotho is silent about.³⁶ This blocks translanguaging from happening, and as a result, social injustice occurs due to linguistic disparity.

Translanguaging theory accedes with the foregoing race theory by stating that language serves as a tool for learning and highlights the need to utilise several languages to enhance understanding and critical thinking.³⁷ Consistent with Kolobe and Matsoso and Matee et al., it is observed that a lack of smooth transition from a learner's first language to a second language can have a negative impact on their second language acquisition, leading to low educational motivation and difficulty in distinguishing between cultures.³⁸ Consequently, denying official recognition of minority languages deprives native speakers of their human rights and social equality with Sesotho speakers. Kolobe and Matsoso found that participants highlighted the importance of ensuring inclusivity in education, as outlined in the CAP.³⁹ They emphasised that learners should have equal access to national resources regardless of their language or ethnic background. An objection that may arise is that excluding learners' native languages from the school curriculum hinders their freedom of speech and expression, as they are unable to access information intended for the public like students from a Sesotho-speaking background. The learners may also experience feelings of neglect in their nation of birth.

Matee et al. emphasise the importance of linguistic competency in education by suggesting that teachers should offer chances for students to practise their literacy skills by also allowing translanguaging to happen in a class.⁴⁰ The current study contends that this action would not only exhibit respect for human rights but also indicate recognition of language diversity against the findings that only two languages are recognised by the policy. In the study of Kolobe and Matsoso, learners noted that the lack of recognition of their languages leads to a decline in their enthusiasm for schooling.⁴¹ Mphomeli asserts that linguistic proficiency is crucial for personal and national development.⁴² The individual stresses the government's requirement to mandate basic education and ensure adequate conditions for language learning. Teaching, scheduling exams, and writing exams should incorporate all languages, including minority languages in the curriculum. Translanguaging theory suggests that languages are directly linked to identity and culture, promoting pupils to accept and appreciate their linguistic variety as a kind of empowerment. This study argues that Sesotho represents only a portion of the Basotho nation.

The study's findings showed limitations on language selection in schools. This is supported by the statement that 'the native language will be utilised as the primary language of teaching up to grade three (subject to available resources), with English being taught as a subject at this and other levels.' The sentence is unclear about whose specific mother tongue is being alluded to, but it becomes evident when English is mentioned. This highlights a significant disparity between English and the indigenous minority language of Lesotho, emphasising the importance of including all spoken languages without discrimination based on the number of speakers, as indicated by their responses. The language policy does not clearly articulate the teaching of minority languages. Learners require a platform that offers them the flexibility to select the language(s) they want to study. Students should have the opportunity to learn Sesotho, siXhosa, Ndebele, or siPhuthi as it would foster their passion for education, motivation to excel, and promote equality and acknowledgment for these languages in society. The exclusion of minority languages from the language policy diminishes their importance. The learners would comprehend better if their native tongues were utilised to explain situations where they are not following. Code-switching is frequently used by speakers of Sesotho. This indicates linguistic inequality in Lesotho.

³⁶ Kimberle Williams Crenshaw, "Twenty Years of Critical Race Theory: Looking Back to Move Forward Commentary: Critical Race Theory: A Commemoration: Lead Article," *Connecticut Law Review* 43 (2011), https://digitalcommons.lib.uconn.edu/law_review/117.

³⁷ Angel M.Y. Lin, "Conceptualising the Potential Role of L1 in CLIL," *Language, Culture and Curriculum* 28, no. 1 (2015): 74–89.

³⁸ Kolobe and Matsoso, "Effects of Language Status on Assessment and Educational Development of Basotho Learners from Minority Languages' Backgrounds."; Matee et al., "Exclusion of Ethnic and Other Minority Language Nationals in Education: A Case of Lesotho's Language in Education Policy."

³⁹ Kolobe and Matsoso, "Effects of Language Status on Assessment and Educational Development of Basotho Learners from Minority Languages' Backgrounds."; Ministry of Education and Training, "Curriculum and Assessment Policy: Education for Individual and Social Development."

⁴⁰ Matee et al., "Exclusion of Ethnic and Other Minority Language Nationals in Education: A Case of Lesotho's Language in Education Policy."

⁴¹ Kolobe and Matsoso, "Effects of Language Status on Assessment and Educational Development of Basotho Learners from Minority Languages' Backgrounds."

⁴² Mphomeli, "Minority Languages' Influence on Teaching and Learning of English in Public Primary Schools."

Learners benefit from having concepts explained in their native language to avoid any sense of inferiority and enhance comprehension. Lesotho currently acknowledges Sesotho as the primary mother tongue due to its prevalence among the Basotho population. However, other languages like IsiXhosa, IsiPhuthi, and IsiNdebele are also present in specific regions and can be utilised in translanguaging to improve learning. This finding demonstrates that the status of a language influences learners' perception of schooling. The study found that learners from minority language backgrounds are unable to acquire their native languages, leading to lower academic performance, reduced enjoyment of schooling, and feelings of inferiority. They are not admitted to high-performing schools due to their shortcomings in various aspects. Consequently, students frequently choose to leave school prematurely due to being disheartened by their inadequate academic progress. Mphomeli recognises that language plays a crucial role in educational advancement.⁴³ The statement highlights that students face difficulties with academic content when not instructed in their mother tongue, underscoring the negative effects of language inequality on students' school attendance and motivation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

An inclusive national language strategy should be implemented to elevate indigenous languages to a national level for usage in all public services, such as education, administration, court, politics, and media. Lesotho's government should officially acknowledge and establish ethnic minority languages to show respect for their speakers as individuals and lawful citizens of Lesotho. Teacher training institutions and other higher learning institutions should provide curricula that include ethnic and minority languages.

To tackle linguistic inequality in language education in Lesotho, it is essential to implement policies and practices that advocate for multilingual education, encourage the use of students' mother tongues in classrooms, and provide teachers with resources to teach effectively in various linguistic settings.

CONCLUSION

This study sets out to explore translanguaging and social justice: The stance of the minority Languages through the lens of the Lesotho curriculum Policy. Based on the findings of this study, it was discovered that minority languages are insignificant in the CAP under language policy. The policy recognises only Sesotho and English as languages of instruction and official languages. Also, it was found that the policy is very silent about roles that can be played by minority languages thus disregarding them even though it appears to be supporting them. Thus, it is concluded that the Lesotho CAP allows social inequality and no translanguaging thus a problem for the education and learning of the minority language speakers.

Linguistic disparities in language education can profoundly impact individuals and the education system overall. When the language used for teaching is not the student's primary language, it can hinder learning and restrict educational opportunities. Students may face difficulties in comprehending teachings, resulting in decreased academic achievement and increased rates of leaving school. Students who struggle to communicate effectively in the language of learning may face reduced motivation and self-esteem. This could adversely affect their academic performance and general well-being. Linguistic disparity can lead to educational differences among various linguistic groups. Students who are native speakers of the language of instruction may have an edge over non-native speakers, which can lead to ongoing disparities in access to high-quality education. If students are not allowed to improve their skills in the language used for teaching, they could find it difficult to communicate successfully in academic and professional environments. This can restrict their future prospects for advanced education and job options. Emphasising a dominant language in school can lead to the marginalisation of minority languages and cultures in Lesotho. This may result in a decline in cultural heritage and identity among pupils, which can exacerbate language inequality in society.

While MOET suggests the incorporation of minority languages, in reality, this is not happening.⁴⁴ Learners from minority language backgrounds are not only not taught in their home tongue but also discouraged from using it for communication at school. Students, including those from marginalised

⁴³ Mphomeli, "Minority Languages' Influence on Teaching and Learning of English in Public Primary Schools."

⁴⁴ Ministry of Education and Training, "Curriculum and Assessment Policy: Education for Individual and Social Development."

linguistic backgrounds, are instructed in either English or Sesotho. The researchers believe that minority languages, such as all the Nguni repertoire of languages in Lesotho, can aid students in comprehending concepts. After examining the language situation in Lesotho regarding the inclusion of ethnic and other minority language speakers, it was found that the education system in Lesotho is exclusionary and contributes to social and ethnic inequality. This is due to the lack of clarity in the language policy outlined in CAP 2009, which does not specify which mother tongue should be used as a medium of instruction at lower primary levels.⁴⁵ We hope that the essay has provided insights for further exploration on including ethnic minority languages in Lesotho's education system and eliminating social and ethnic inequalities.

Language disparities can impede certain learners from receiving quality education, especially if the medium of teaching is not their home language. Students may have difficulty understanding teachings presented in a language they are not fluent in, resulting in reduced involvement and contribution to class activities. Language hurdles can lead to increased dropout rates, since students who struggle to comprehend the language used for instruction may feel demotivated and stop their studies. Language imbalance can lead to an uneven allocation of educational resources and opportunities, benefiting individuals proficient in the dominant language. Learners may feel disconnected from their cultural and linguistic identity when education is mostly delivered in a different language that does not sufficiently include their cultural background. Language obstacles can impede academic success, impacting performance on tests and evaluations, and potentially leading to lasting effects on employment prospects. Standardised exams administered in a foreign language to pupils may not provide an accurate representation of their actual abilities, resulting in biased ratings.

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⁴⁵ Ministry of Education and Training, "Curriculum and Assessment Policy: Education for Individual and Social Development."

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