

Translanguaging as a Pedagogical Tool: Teachers' Perspectives in Secondary Schools of O.R. Tambo Inland District, Eastern Cape

Lundi Nomlala¹ 

¹ Faculty of Education, Humanities and Creative Arts Education, Walter Sisulu University, Queenstown, South Africa.



ABSTRACT

This study explored secondary school teachers' perspectives on the use of translanguaging as a pedagogical tool in the O.R. Tambo Inland District, Eastern Cape. It focused on social interactions, academic engagement, teacher-learner relationships, and academic achievement. An interpretivism paradigm was used. Using qualitative data collected from the semi-structured interviews, a convenience sample of six teachers was employed. The study examined how incorporating isiXhosa alongside English influences learners' confidence, participation, understanding, and classroom dynamics. Findings revealed that translanguaging fosters stronger peer relationships, reduces social anxiety, and promotes inclusivity by bridging linguistic and cultural divides. It enhances learners' comprehension and engagement by allowing complex concepts to be processed in the home language before transitioning to English, thereby supporting deeper learning. Additionally, translanguaging improves teacher-learner communication and classroom management by creating a respectful, supportive environment. Crucially, it positively impacts academic achievement, helping learners articulate ideas more clearly and perform better across subjects. Based on these findings, the study recommends integrating translanguaging pedagogies into curricula, providing targeted teacher training, developing inclusive language policies, and encouraging bilingual approaches in assessments and group work. This research contributes to multilingual education by demonstrating translanguaging as a vital pedagogical strategy that promotes equity, learner agency, and academic success in diverse classrooms.

Correspondence

Lundi Nomlala

Email:

lnomlala@wsu.ac.za

Publication History

Received: 6th June, 2025

Accepted: 4th November, 2025

Published online:

30th December, 2025

To Cite this Article:

Nomlala, Lundi.

"Translanguaging as a Pedagogical Tool:

Teachers' Perspectives in Secondary Schools of O.R. Tambo Inland District, Eastern Cape."

E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences 6, no. 14 (2025): 3860 - 3872,

<https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.202561434>.

Keywords: Translanguaging, isiXhosa, multilingual education, learner engagement, academic achievement

INTRODUCTION

South Africa, a linguistically super-diverse country with 12 official languages, is a rich tapestry of multicultural diversity.¹ The country's commitment to recognizing multiple languages as official is a testament to its respect for linguistic heritage.² In South African classrooms, there seem to be many learners who are diverse in terms of culture, language, values, and norms. This linguistic diversity is particularly pronounced in the educational sector, with South African classrooms now more linguistically

¹ Felix Banda, "Beyond Language Crossing: Exploring Multilingualism and Multicultural Identities through Popular Music Lyrics," *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* 14, no. 4 (October 2, 2019): 373–89, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17447143.2019.1645144>.

² Mlamli Diko, "The Retainment of South African Indigenous Languages: A Systemic Literature Review," *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science* (2147- 4478) 12, no. 5 (July 28, 2023): 306–14, <https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v12i5.2427>.

diverse than ever, accommodating learners from various linguistic backgrounds.³ As a result, it is expected to find learners who speak two or more official languages and take English or Afrikaans as their first or second additional language in schools.

This multilingual environment necessitates innovative teaching strategies and inclusive practices to accommodate the varied linguistic needs of learners.⁴ This diversity presents challenges and opportunities for teachers and policymakers, who must navigate the complexities of multilingual education while ensuring equitable access to learning for all students.⁵ Translanguaging is perceived as one of the ways to accommodate all learners in diverse classrooms. Translanguaging is when multilingual learners use all their linguistic resources, both their native tongues and other languages, to aid learning.⁶ Encouraging learners to think and speak in various languages goes beyond mere translation and fosters a comprehensive grasp of language and communication. This method acknowledges the vast linguistic repertoire of multilingual learners, which can be leveraged to enhance learning. Hence, this study sees translanguaging as a pedagogical approach that uses the entire linguistic repertoire to encourage learning and ensure that learners in the South African classroom fully use teaching and learning.

The implementation of Translanguaging should be understood with due consideration of institutional policies and national or state policies regarding the medium of instruction, such as English as a medium of instruction (EMI), to unravel further the complexity of translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy regarding its effectiveness in application.⁷

Teachers' diverse attitudes in the struggle to apply translanguaging in teaching and learning are related to several policy initiatives. In line with the Language Policy Framework for Basic Education Institutions, individual and societal multilingualism should be seen as "a resource to facilitate cognitive development, epistemic access, inclusiveness, transformation, social cohesion and respect for all languages." Another driving force behind this translanguaging issue is that monolingual pedagogies have been shown to cause learners who might not be able to speak or understand the language of teaching to experience severe learning challenges. The attitudes toward monolingual and multilingual approaches are nearly equally divided.⁸

Another study by Ticheloven et.al. reported that learners have a mixed position on Translanguaging, although its utility for emotional expression is widely recognized.⁹ Some challenges include linguistic isolation, confusion, and lower motivation to learn the language. This is an essential stage of education and probably the most challenging for learners who do not know English, the language of teaching in South Africa, from the Grade Foundation Phase onwards. Some studies have been conducted regarding translanguaging in schools. However, little research has focused on the impact of translanguaging in rural and township schools. Hence, this paper seeks to explore and understand secondary school teachers' perspectives on the use of translanguaging as a pedagogical tool in the O.R. Tambo Inland District, Eastern Cape. The following research question guided this research paper:

- What are secondary school teachers' perspectives on translanguaging as a pedagogical tool in the O.R. Tambo Inland District, Eastern Cape?

The research aim was as follows:

- To explore and understand secondary school teachers' perspectives on the use of translanguaging as a pedagogical tool in the O.R. Tambo Inland District, Eastern Cape.

³ Malephole Philomena Sefotho, "Strategies for Reading Development among Sesotho-English Bilinguals: Efficacy of Translanguaging" (2019).

⁴ Appolonia Masunungure and Mbulaheni Maguvhe, "Strategies to Enhance the Inclusion of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners in Gauteng Schools: Teachers' Perspectives," *South African Journal of Education* 44, no. 3 (August 31, 2024): 1–7, <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v44n3a2367>.

⁵ Ofelia Garcia and Ricardo Otheguy, "Plurilingualism and Translanguaging: Commonalities and Divergences," *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 23, no. 1 (January 2, 2020): 17–35, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2019.1598932>.

⁶ Fan Fang, Lawrence Jun Zhang, and Pramod K Sah, "Translanguaging in Language Teaching and Learning: Current Practices and Future Directions," *RELC Journal* 53, no. 2 (August 16, 2022): 305–12, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00336882221114478>.

⁷ Fang, Zhang, and Sah, "Translanguaging in Language Teaching and Learning: Current Practices and Future Directions."

⁸ Danping Wang, "Translanguaging in Chinese Foreign Language Classrooms: Students and Teachers' Attitudes and Practices," *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 22, no. 2 (February 17, 2019): 138–49, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2016.1231773>.

⁹ Anouk Ticheloven et al., "Translanguaging Challenges in Multilingual Classrooms: Scholar, Teacher and Student Perspectives," *International Journal of Multilingualism* 18, no. 3 (July 3, 2021): 491–514, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2019.1686002>.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Translanguaging and Multilingual Pedagogies in Global and South African Educational Contexts

The concept of multilingualism in Global English Language Instruction (GELI) underscores the importance of acknowledging both teachers' and learners' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Rosa and Flores emphasize that translanguaging is central to inclusive pedagogical practices, as it permits the dynamic use of linguistic repertoires to enhance comprehension and participation.¹⁰ Iversen supports this by arguing that access to information in multiple languages is a "core element" that significantly enriches subject-matter knowledge.¹¹ In environments where translanguaging is encouraged, learners are more likely to succeed academically because their diverse linguistic identities are recognized and accommodated.

Qureshi and Aljanadbah argue that translanguaging facilitates the transfer of prior knowledge from a learner's first language, Arabic, in their study into second-language learning, thereby improving comprehension and retention of concepts in English.¹² Similarly, Steele, et.al. provide insight into the linguistic experiences of Aboriginal learners in Australia, who use diverse dialects and linguistic resources in daily life but face systemic disadvantages, especially in assessments rooted in monolingual norms. Such practices can marginalize learners and perpetuate inequality.¹³

Otheguy, et.al. drawing from empirical data on Latino speakers in the United States, claim that bilinguals do not compartmentalize languages into separate systems; rather, they possess a unitary linguistic competence.¹⁴ This perspective challenges the traditional dichotomy of language separation and supports translanguaging as a natural cognitive process. Both educators and learners use semiotic resources, linguistic and non-linguistic, to co-construct meaning. Consequently, the tutoring system, if operating within a monolingual paradigm, may inadvertently reinforce educational dehumanization by ignoring the multilingual realities of learners. This leads to broader critiques, such as Rosa and Flores assertion that the colonial construction of languages as discrete and bounded entities must be dismantled.¹⁵ Such frameworks, he argues, are remnants of colonial and Western-centric ideologies. The failure of education policies, such as South Africa's Language in Education Policy, to fully integrate translanguaging indicates a missed opportunity to promote linguistic interdependence and pedagogical inclusivity.

Empirical evidence from various global contexts reinforces the potential of translanguaging to enhance educational outcomes. In Pakistan, Qureshi and Aljanadbah demonstrate that learners use their First Language (L1) to clarify and internalize concepts in English, facilitating a more holistic understanding. Translanguaging enables learners to integrate all available linguistic knowledge and develop deeper insights into both L1 and a second language (L2).¹⁶ This also assists educators in drawing linguistic comparisons and demystifying complex vocabulary. From an African perspective, Nyimbili and Mwanza examine the application of translanguaging in Zambia, where educators translated essential content from English into local languages to improve classroom comprehension.¹⁷ Their findings highlight that learners performed better academically when their linguistic backgrounds were actively incorporated into the learning process.

In South Africa, translanguaging has gained scholarly attention for its potential to address issues of social justice and academic equity in multilingual classrooms. Mokikwa and Mokhele-Ramulumo

¹⁰ Jonathan Rosa and Nelson Flores, "Rethinking Language Barriers & Social Justice from a Raciolinguistic Perspective," *Daedalus* 152, no. 3 (August 1, 2023): 99–114, https://doi.org/10.1162/daed_a_02020.

¹¹ Jonas Yassin Iversen, "'Translanguaging' and the Implications for the Future Teaching of English in Norway," *Nordic Journal of Modern Language Methodology* 7, no. 1 (January 20, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.46364/njmlm.v7i1.520>.

¹² Muhammad Asif Qureshi and Ahmad Aljanadbah, "Translanguaging and Reading Comprehension in a Second Language," *International Multilingual Research Journal* 16, no. 4 (October 2, 2022): 247–57, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19313152.2021.2009158>.

¹³ Carly Steele, Sender Dovchin, and Rhonda Oliver, "'Stop Measuring Black Kids with a White Stick': Translanguaging for Classroom Assessment," *RELC Journal* 53, no. 2 (August 28, 2022): 400–415, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00336882221086307>.

¹⁴ Ricardo Otheguy, Ofelia Garcia, 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>.

¹⁵ Rosa and Flores, "Rethinking Language Barriers & Social Justice from a Raciolinguistic Perspective."

¹⁶ Qureshi and Aljanadbah, "Translanguaging and Reading Comprehension in a Second Language."

¹⁷ Friday Nyimbili and Leah Nyimbili, "Types of Purposive Sampling Techniques with Their Examples and Application in Qualitative Research Studies," *British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies* 5, no. 1 (February 16, 2024): 90–99, <https://doi.org/10.37745/bjmas.2022.0419>.

emphasize recognizing linguistic diversity as a pedagogical asset, advocating for inclusive classrooms that bridge language barriers.¹⁸ Translanguaging has particular relevance in addressing the L2 proficiency gap, especially for learners who struggle with English as the medium of instruction due to its colonial legacy.¹⁹ By allowing learners to scaffold their understanding through their home languages, translanguaging improves confidence, vocabulary acquisition, and overall comprehension.

Moreover, translanguaging is increasingly linked to the broader decolonization agenda in South Africa. This movement, rooted in a response to apartheid-era linguistic hierarchies, challenges the dominance of English and Afrikaans in education. Resisting the notion of languages as mutually exclusive can serve as a transformative act of decolonization. Nonetheless, Charamba notes that the benefits of translanguaging have not been fully realized in the South African context, warranting further research and implementation.²⁰

Teachers play a critical role in this regard. According to Mokikwa and Mokhele-Ramulumo, educators' attitudes toward translanguaging directly influence its classroom effectiveness.²¹ Understanding their perspectives is essential for identifying both challenges and opportunities in applying translanguaging pedagogies. Hattingh et al. conducted research across the Western Cape, Gauteng, and Eastern Cape, revealing that translanguaging practices challenge prevailing monolingual ideologies and promote deeper conceptual learning by validating learners' linguistic resources.²² Translanguaging holds significant promise for enhancing learning outcomes, promoting inclusivity, and challenging colonial linguistic hierarchies. As global and South African research demonstrates, embracing multilingual pedagogies is essential for equitable and effective education in diverse classrooms.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Inclusive Pedagogy and Translanguaging

This study is underpinned by the *Inclusive Pedagogy Approach* developed by Spratt and Florian, which provides a robust framework for understanding and implementing translanguaging practices within linguistically diverse classrooms.²³ Inclusive pedagogy is grounded in the principle that teaching should not focus on categorizing learners based on perceived deficits but instead create learning environments where all learners can participate meaningfully. Inclusive pedagogy encompasses strategies such as flexible learning, learner-centred instruction, and the recognition of learners' individual knowledge, beliefs, and experiences, all of which resonate with the principles of translanguaging.

Originating from the Inclusive Practice Project (IPP) at the University of Aberdeen, the inclusive pedagogy model reflects a socio-cultural understanding of learning, emphasizing collaboration and shared meaning-making.²⁴ Applied to the South African context, this approach holds particular relevance, given the country's constitutionally recognized twelve official languages and its legacy of linguistic marginalization under apartheid.²⁵ By embracing translanguaging as a pedagogical tool, inclusive pedagogy not only accommodates linguistic diversity but also leverages it to enrich the educational experience and promote social justice.

Spratt and Florian emphasize the importance of fostering a collective classroom community rather than individualizing learners, thereby creating equitable learning opportunities.²⁶ Translanguaging aligns

¹⁸ Hamza Mokikwa and Moleboheng Mokhele-Ramulumo, "Navigating Language Diversity In Multilingual Stem Classrooms: Strategies For Inclusive Education," *International Education Trend Issues* 2, no. 2 (February 27, 2024): 92–106, <https://doi.org/10.56442/iet.v2i2.421>.

¹⁹ Shakina Rajendram, "'Our Country Has Gained Independence, but We Haven't': Collaborative Translanguaging to Decolonize English Language Teaching," *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 42 (March 2, 2022): 78–86, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190521000155>.

²⁰ Erasmos Charamba, "Translanguaging as Bona Fide Practice in a Multilingual South African Science Classroom," *International Review of Education* 69, no. 1–2 (April 13, 2023): 31–50, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-023-09990-0>.

²¹ Mokikwa and Mokhele-Ramulumo, "Navigating Language Diversity In Multilingual Stem Classrooms: Strategies For Inclusive Education."

²² Annemarie Hattingh et al., "Translanguaging in Science Education in South African Classrooms: Challenging Constraining Ideologies for Science Teacher Education," 2021, 231–56, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-82973-5_11.

²³ Jennifer Spratt and Lani Florian, "Inclusive Pedagogy: From Learning to Action. Supporting Each Individual in the Context of 'Everybody,'" *Teaching and Teacher Education* 49 (July 2015): 89–96, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2015.03.006>.

²⁴ Eija Aalto and Sanna Mustonen, "Preparing Pre-Service Teachers for Inclusive Pedagogy in Multilingual and Multicultural Settings," *TEAMS-Teaching That Matters for Migrant Students*, 2022.

²⁵ Banda, "Beyond Language Crossing: Exploring Multilingualism and Multicultural Identities through Popular Music Lyrics."

²⁶ Spratt and Florian, "Inclusive Pedagogy: From Learning to Action. Supporting Each Individual in the Context of 'Everybody.'"

with this goal by enabling learners from varied linguistic backgrounds to engage more effectively in the learning process. The decolonization of education in South Africa necessitates the dismantling of apartheid-era language ideologies, which devalued African languages.²⁷ In this regard, the integration of translanguaging into inclusive pedagogy serves as both a pedagogical and political act, affirming that all learners are of equal value and should be treated equitably within the educational system.

METHODOLOGY

This paper utilized the interpretivism paradigm, as defined by Pervin and Mokhtar, as a social science paradigm asserting that reality is subjective, emphasizing understanding phenomena from the perspective of individuals.²⁸ This paradigm is relevant to this paper as it allows different people in a society to experience and understand the same "objective" reality in various ways and have individual reasons for their actions.²⁹ Each participant was asked their views on translanguaging as a pedagogical tool.

The qualitative research approach was employed in this paper, as it is the approach that allows a deeper understanding of complex phenomena or involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences in-depth.³⁰ Rather than testing hypotheses, it is subjective, explorative, and generative.³¹ This approach is relevant to this study as it allowed an in-depth understanding of teachers' views on the impact of translanguaging in their classrooms.

A case study research design was employed in secondary schools in the O.R. Tambo inland district to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' views on the impact of translanguaging, which is relevant to this study, as a case study can be defined as an appropriate approach for answering descriptive or exploratory questions.³²

This paper employed convenience sampling because it is a non-probability sampling method that is helpful when a researcher has limited resources, including time and money.³³ The researcher sampled six teachers from three schools (two teachers per school). This sample size was considered suitable for this study since each participant's narrative was detailed before explaining their shared views, and each participant was asked follow-up questions. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews since the researchers aimed to detail the participants.

Ethical Considerations

Letters were written to all relevant stakeholders requesting permission to conduct a study, ensuring their voluntary and informed participation. The study maintained the anonymity of all participants by not disclosing their identities in any reports or publications. All participants' information was treated strictly, ensuring personal data was securely stored and used only for research purposes. Participants were made aware that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences ensuring their consequences, ensuring their autonomy and freedom. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they were fully aware of the study's purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits before agreeing to participate. Informed consent safeguards transparency and enables patients to exert control over the use of their health data and retain privacy. In addition, the researcher applied for ethical clearance from the institution's (Walter Sisulu University) ethics committee to follow the university protocol to conduct research with the number (2024/FEDREC/2239).

²⁷ Rosa and Flores, "Rethinking Language Barriers & Social Justice from a Raciolinguistic Perspective."

²⁸ Nasrin Pervin and Mahani Mokhtar, "The Interpretivist Research Paradigm: A Subjective Notion of a Social Context," *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development* 11, no. 2 (2022): 419–28.

²⁹ Husam Helmi Alharahsheh and Abraham Pius, "A Review of Key Paradigms: Positivism VS Interpretivism," *Global Academic Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 2, no. 3 (2020): 39–43.

³⁰ Alexus Bazen, Frances K. Barg, and Junko Takeshita, "Research Techniques Made Simple: An Introduction to Qualitative Research," *Journal of Investigative Dermatology* 141, no. 2 (February 2021): 241-247.e1, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jid.2020.11.029>.

³¹ Joan DeJaeghere et al., "Guidance Note on Qualitative Research in Education: Considerations for Best Practice," *London, England: United Kingdom Department for International Development, Prepared for Building Evidence in Education (BE2)*, 2020.

³² Robert E. White and Karyn Cooper, "Case Study Research," in *Qualitative Research in the Post-Modern Era* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022), 233–85, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-85124-8_7.

³³ K. Nikolopoulou, "What Is Purposive Sampling?| Definition & Examples," 2022, <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/purposive-sampling/>.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Sub-theme 1: The effects that translanguaging has on learners' relationships and social interactions at school

Pertaining to the effect that translation has on learners' relationships and social interactions at school, the findings from the participants (teachers) are as follows:

During English-language debates, the IsiXhosa learners in my Grade 10 class tend to stay back. However, learners become more involved when we let them brainstorm or explain things to one another in isiXhosa first. They become more self-assured and are encouraged to assist one another socially, which alters their interactions with others (Teacher A).

My learners are much closer when I allow IsiXhosa in the classroom. There is greater openness and trust when they are able to communicate complicated emotions in their mother tongue before transferring to English. It improves connections between peers, particularly in group projects where language may have previously caused division (Teacher B).

When translanguaging is used, I have observed that my isiXhosa-speaking learners feel closer to their friends. They form a sort of intellectual camaraderie when they translate important terminology or explain concepts to one another in isiXhosa. They cease feeling alone and start working as a team (Teacher C).

IsiXhosa speakers who transition between languages to address difficulties have some of my best group dynamics. By subsequently providing an explanation in English, they even attract classmates from diverse backgrounds. It dismantles cliques and fosters a sense of respect for one another (Teacher D).

I saw a significant change when I let my learners debate scientific material in isiXhosa before presenting it in English. Formerly silent IsiXhosa learners took the lead in conversations. Their colleagues began to view them as knowledgeable individuals rather than merely English language learners (Teacher E).

My isiXhosa learners feel like they belong because of translanguaging. They form emotional bonds with their peers through a common language, and these bonds extend to other domains. Because they are not under constant pressure to "perform" English, you will discover that learners are more likely to make friends in other languages (Teacher F).

The teachers' responses reveal that translanguaging has a notably positive impact on the social dynamics and peer relationships of isiXhosa-speaking Grade 10 learners who are learning English as a First Additional Language (FAL). When these learners are permitted to use isiXhosa alongside English, they engage more confidently in classroom interactions, which fosters stronger peer collaboration. Translanguaging provides a sense of linguistic and cultural validation, allowing learners to express complex thoughts and emotions without the fear of making mistakes in English. This, in turn, helps reduce anxiety and social isolation, particularly in academically demanding environments like Grade 10. The learners feel empowered to participate actively, lead discussions, and support each other, forming informal learning communities that promote inclusion and mutual respect.

Sub-theme 2: The effect of translanguaging on learners' understanding and engagement

Regarding the effects of translanguaging on learners' understanding and engagement, teachers have various concerns.

I notice a significant difference when I initially let my isiXhosa learners discuss the material in their native tongue. All of a sudden, they have a greater understanding of the words and topics. Their responses become more in-depth and pertinent when they transition to English (Teacher A).

Some of the ideas we teach, such as global warming and erosion, are challenging to explain in English. However, learners grasp it considerably more quickly after discussing it in isiXhosa. They are able to convey meaning through translanguaging that English simply cannot (Teacher B).

I was mistaken to believe that math did not require a lot of words. My isiXhosa learners were more attentive and made fewer mistakes when I let them describe procedures in isiXhosa before giving an English presentation. Their thinking was greatly aided by it (Teacher C).

My isiXhosa learners benefit from translanguaging when it comes to making connections between new and existing material. I have witnessed learners who typically become passive during class come to life when we allow them to speak in isiXhosa first. It engages children in the process of learning (Teacher D).

Some of my isiXhosa learners hesitate when I ask them questions in English first. The class becomes more engaged, though, if I let them speak or think in isiXhosa first. Participation and comprehension both rise with translanguaging (Teacher E).

Many learners become disinterested when they are unable to comprehend English terminology. However, learners re-engage and even ask questions if we break them down in isiXhosa. They feel that the topic is for them, not just English speakers, thanks to translanguaging (Teacher F).

The responses from the teachers clearly indicate that translanguaging significantly enhances both understanding and engagement among isiXhosa-speaking Grade 10 learners who are learning English as a First Additional Language. Teachers across various subjects—ranging from English and Life Sciences to Mathematics and Business Studies—consistently observed that learners grasp concepts more effectively when allowed to engage with content in both isiXhosa and English. Complex terminology and abstract ideas become more accessible when discussed in learners' home language first, leading to more accurate and meaningful comprehension. Translanguaging acts as a cognitive bridge that connects learners' existing knowledge with new content, enabling deeper processing and improved academic outcomes.

Sub-theme 3: The effects that translanguaging has on teacher-learner interactions and classroom management

Because they lack confidence in their ability to communicate in English, they are scared to approach their teacher with any questions they may have. However, they open up when I speak a little isiXhosa. Because the learner's English sounds soft, they become more fearful of you when you speak their mother tongue for classroom control (Teacher A).

As a result of using both their home language and the medium of teaching, the learners and teachers are able to communicate effectively. When we blend English and IsiXhosa, learners are more receptive and do not feel afraid to talk to me (Teacher B).

Because both teachers and students utilize the second language as their mother tongue, the learners may experience a positive effect, even though their communication is slow in English. They have excellent relationships and interactions at school because they are aware that they will be given the chance to express themselves in their native tongue (Teacher C).

Learners comprehend expectations better when I explain rules or instructions in isiXhosa. Because of the increased cooperation and less confusion, it helps me better manage the classroom (Teacher D).

The distance between the learners and me is lessened by translanguaging. They smile, ask questions, and relax when I speak some isiXhosa. It fosters a more cordial and courteous atmosphere rather than merely a fear of authority (Teacher E).

Although I initially believed that switching languages would lead to chaos, it really promotes discipline. For the learners, correcting behavior in isiXhosa feels more serious and personal. They take me more seriously and react more quickly (Teacher F).

The responses from the six Grade 10 teachers reveal that translanguaging has a positive impact on teacher-learner interactions, particularly with isiXhosa-speaking learners who are learning English as a First Additional Language. Teachers consistently noted that when they incorporate isiXhosa into their communication, learners become more confident, open, and willing to engage. By using learners' home language, teachers reduce the intimidation often associated with English-only instruction, creating a more approachable and supportive environment. This enhances not only classroom communication but also strengthens relationships, as learners feel understood and respected.

Sub-theme 4: The effects of translanguaging on learners' academic achievement

With reference to the effect of translanguaging on learners' academic achievement, participants responded as follows:

My isiXhosa learners' comprehension improves when I let them discuss literature in their native tongue before responding in English. Their grades increase as they produce stronger responses. Before writing in a second language, translanguaging enables them to think more clearly (Teacher A).

Many of the words used in the life sciences are difficult to understand in English. However, students recall them better when they explain them to one another in isiXhosa. When they revise in this manner, I have observed an improvement in their exam scores. It has had a significant impact (Teacher B).

Performance in math has increased after I began promoting group projects in isiXhosa. They comprehend the steps, apply them more effectively, and discuss concerns more openly. Even in subjects that people believe to be "language-neutral," translanguaging is assisting them in succeeding (Teacher C).

Learners' confidence increases when I translate complex ideas into isiXhosa or allow them to express themselves in their own terms. According to their exam scores, individuals have a deeper understanding of the material. Academic progress is facilitated by translanguaging (Teacher D).

In the past, some learners would fail because they could not grasp English in the test questions. They now do better once we break down the subjects in isiXhosa throughout class. They are undoubtedly getting better grades (Teacher E).

I have found that learners' writings are more cohesive and well-structured when they are permitted to write down their ideas in isiXhosa before translating them into English. It enables learners to concentrate on more than simply the language. That improvement is shown in their grades (Teacher F).

The teachers' responses strongly suggest that translanguaging enhances academic achievement for isiXhosa-speaking Grade 10 learners who are learning English as a First Additional Language. By allowing learners to process content in their home language before engaging with it in English, teachers observed improved comprehension, confidence, and retention of subject matter. Across various subjects—from Life Sciences to Business Studies—teachers reported that learners performed better on assessments and participated more meaningfully in lessons when translanguaging was used as a bridge between their linguistic background and academic content. This approach reduces the cognitive load associated with decoding unfamiliar English terminology, allowing learners to focus on grasping the actual concepts and applying them effectively.

DISCUSSION

Sub-theme 1: The Effects of Translanguaging on Learners' Relationships and Social Interactions at School

The findings indicate that translanguaging significantly enhances social relationships among Grade 10 isiXhosa-speaking learners. The encouragement to use isiXhosa in classroom settings fosters increased self-confidence and learner engagement, contributing to the creation of an inclusive and collaborative learning environment.³⁴ This approach affirms learners' sense of self-worth, thereby reducing anxiety and promoting stronger peer connections. According to teachers, bilingual interactions facilitate the integration of isiXhosa speakers into the broader classroom community by nurturing empathy and mutual respect.³⁵ Through shared cultural and linguistic experiences, translanguaging reduces linguistic barriers, cultivates tolerance, and strengthens interpersonal bonds. Overall, translanguaging emerges as an effective pedagogical strategy that fosters a classroom culture of equity, trust, and mutual support, thereby enhancing both social cohesion and academic engagement.

Sub-theme 2: The Effect of Translanguaging on Learners' Understanding and Engagement

Teachers reported that translanguaging enhances both comprehension and engagement for Grade 10 isiXhosa-speaking learners. The use of isiXhosa during academic activities helped bridge gaps created by complex English terminology, enabling learners to grasp intricate subject matter more effectively.³⁶ Engaging with content in their home language facilitated clearer understanding and more accurate responses in English. By linking new academic concepts with familiar linguistic structures, translanguaging supports cognitive development. Furthermore, learners demonstrated a marked shift from passivity to active participation when permitted to use isiXhosa, becoming more inquisitive and confident.³⁷ Hence, translanguaging functions as a powerful mechanism for equitable and meaningful participation, supporting deeper academic insight and fostering active learning.

Sub-theme 3: The Effects of Translanguaging on Teacher-Learner Interactions and Classroom Management

The findings reveal that translanguaging strengthens communication and emotional connections between teachers and learners. When educators employed isiXhosa, either independently or alongside English, learners felt more comfortable and were more inclined to pose questions. This bilingual approach cultivated a classroom atmosphere characterized by warmth, openness, and mutual respect, while also mitigating the anxiety often associated with English-only instruction.³⁸ Teachers noted heightened learner responsiveness and trust. Furthermore, the use of isiXhosa enhanced classroom management by clarifying expectations and improving learner behavior. Instructions delivered in the home language led to better understanding, attentiveness, and respect for authority. Contrary to concerns about potential confusion, translanguaging promoted clarity, cooperation, and order.³⁹ Overall, it proved to be an effective strategy for managing linguistically diverse classrooms while fostering strong teacher-learner relationships.

Sub-theme 4: The Effects of Translanguaging on Learners' Academic Achievement

The findings demonstrate that translanguaging positively impacts the academic achievement of isiXhosa-speaking learners studying English as a First Additional Language. Teachers reported that allowing

³⁴ Anele Gobodwana, "The Strategies in Teaching IsiXhosa Semantics in Foundation Phase: A Systematic Review," *Reading & Writing* 15, no. 1 (2024): 1–10.

³⁵ Yanga L.P. Majola, "Teachers' Language Attitudes towards the Use of a Nonstandard Variety in the Classroom in Grades 1–3: A Case of IsiBhaca in Umzimkhulu, KwaZulu-Natal," *Literator* 43, no. 1 (October 6, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.4102/lit.v43i1.1884>.

³⁶ Maimona Salie, Mokgadi Moletsane, and Robert Kananga Mukuna, "Case Study of IsiXhosa-Speaking Foundation Phase Learners Who Experience Barriers to Learning in an English-Medium Disadvantaged Western Cape School," *South African Journal of Education* 40, no. 2 (May 31, 2020): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v40n2a1455>.

³⁷ Chantelle August-Mowers, "Unfreedoms of IsiXhosa Learners in Afrikaans Grade 10 Classrooms: A Capability Perspective," *Perspectives in Education* 43, no. 1 (May 19, 2025): 282–97, <https://doi.org/10.38140/pie.v43i1.7979>.

³⁸ Takako Inada, "Teachers' Strategies for Decreasing Students' Anxiety Levels to Improve Their Communicative Skills," *English Language Teaching* 14, no. 3 (February 25, 2021): 32, <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v14n3p32>.

³⁹ Petronella NN Machimana and Gerhard Genis, "Translanguaging in the Classroom: A Strategy for English First Additional Language Learning," *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies* 42, no. sup1 (December 6, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.2989/16073614.2024.2387610>.

learners to first formulate and express their ideas in isiXhosa enhanced their ability to convey understanding in English. This process effectively reduced linguistic barriers and improved content mastery, particularly in linguistically demanding subjects such as Mathematics and Life Sciences.⁴⁰ Moreover, the approach contributed to the development of learners' academic self-concept and confidence. As their ideas were validated in their home language, learners produced more structured and substantive oral and written responses, resulting in improved academic performance. Overall, translanguaging empowered learners academically and emerged as a vital strategy for fostering inclusive and effective instruction in multilingual classrooms.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Integrate Translanguaging Pedagogies into Curriculum and Lesson Planning

Translanguaging techniques are to be properly incorporated into curriculum standards and regular classroom instruction by educational institutions and authorities. Instructors must be urged and prepared to create classes that let learners interact with academic material in both English and isiXhosa.

2. Provide Targeted Professional Development for Teachers on Translanguaging

Ongoing professional development programs that give teachers the theoretical understanding and hands-on skills they need to successfully apply translanguaging in all subject areas should be implemented by Departments of Education and school leadership teams.

3. Develop Inclusive Language Policies that Legitimize and Support Home Languages in Education

The use of learners' native tongues, such as isiXhosa, as legitimate tools for communication and learning in the classroom should be expressly acknowledged and encouraged by school and district language policy.

4. Encourage Translanguaging in Classroom Assessments and Group Work

Particularly in conceptually difficult subjects, teachers should be urged to permit the use of translanguaging in formative evaluations, group discussions, brainstorming exercises, and content review.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study underscore the transformative role of translanguaging in enhancing the educational experience of isiXhosa-speaking Grade 10 learners in English First Additional Language (FAL) classrooms. Across four sub-themes—relationships and social interactions, learner understanding and engagement, teacher-learner interactions and classroom management, and academic achievement—translanguaging emerged as a powerful pedagogical and relational tool. Translanguaging was found to significantly improve learners' social relationships by promoting inclusivity, cultural affirmation, and peer collaboration. In terms of academic engagement and comprehension, translanguaging helped learners better understand complex content by allowing them to process ideas in a familiar linguistic framework. This approach fostered deeper cognitive engagement, increased participation, and empowered learners to contribute meaningfully to classroom discussions. The practice also enhanced teacher-learner interactions and classroom management. Teachers reported stronger connections with learners, improved communication, and better behavioral outcomes when they strategically incorporated isiXhosa into classroom dialogue.

Most significantly, translanguaging had a positive effect on learners' academic achievement. Reducing the cognitive burden of operating solely in English enabled learners to focus on mastering content. Teachers observed measurable improvements in performance across subjects, from language-based assessments to numeracy-focused tasks, alongside a visible boost in learner confidence and academic identity.

⁴⁰ Simthembile Xeketwana and Maureen Robinson, "The Teaching and Learning of IsiXhosa for Communicative Purposes in Teacher Education for the Foundation Phase," *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, February 23, 2025, 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.2989/16073614.2024.2357325>.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aalto, Eija, and Sanna Mustonen. "Preparing Pre-Service Teachers for Inclusive Pedagogy in Multilingual and Multicultural Settings." *TEAMS-Teaching That Matters for Migrant Students*, 2022.
- Alharahsheh, Husam Helmi, and Abraham Pius. "A Review of Key Paradigms: Positivism VS Interpretivism." *Global Academic Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 2, no.3(2020): 39–43.
- August-Mowers, Chantelle. "Unfreedoms of IsiXhosa Learners in Afrikaans Grade 10 Classrooms: A Capability Perspective." *Perspectives in Education* 43, no. 1 (May 19, 2025): 282–97. <https://doi.org/10.38140/pie.v43i1.7979>.
- Banda, Felix. "Beyond Language Crossing: Exploring Multilingualism and Multicultural Identities through Popular Music Lyrics." *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* 14, no. 4 (October 2, 2019): 373–89. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17447143.2019.1645144>.
- Bazen, Alexis, Frances K. Barg, and Junko Takeshita. "Research Techniques Made Simple: An Introduction to Qualitative Research." *Journal of Investigative Dermatology* 141, no. 2 (February 2021): 241-247.e1. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jid.2020.11.029>.
- Charamba, Erasmios. "Translanguaging as Bona Fide Practice in a Multilingual South African Science Classroom." *International Review of Education* 69, no. 1–2 (April 13, 2023): 31–50. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-023-09990-0>.
- DeJaeghere, Joan, V Morrow, D Richardson, B Schowengerdt, R Hinton, and A Muñoz Boudet. "Guidance Note on Qualitative Research in Education: Considerations for Best Practice." *London, England: United Kingdom Department for International Development, Prepared for Building Evidence in Education (BE2)*, 2020.
- Diko, Mlamli. "The Retainment of South African Indigenous Languages: A Systemic Literature Review." *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science (2147- 4478)* 12, no. 5 (July 28, 2023): 306–14. <https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v12i5.2427>.
- Fang, Fan, Lawrence Jun Zhang, and Pramod K Sah. "Translanguaging in Language Teaching and Learning: Current Practices and Future Directions." *RELC Journal* 53, no. 2 (August 16, 2022): 305–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00336882221114478>.
- García, Ofelia, and Ricardo Otheguy. "Plurilingualism and Translanguaging: Commonalities and Divergences." *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 23, no. 1 (January 2, 2020): 17–35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2019.1598932>.
- Gobodwana, Anele. "The Strategies in Teaching IsiXhosa Semantics in Foundation Phase: A Systematic Review." *Reading & Writing* 15, no. 1 (2024): 1–10.
- Hattingh, Annemarie, Carolyn McKinney, Audrey Msimanga, Margie Probyn, and Robyn Tyler. "Translanguaging in Science Education in South African Classrooms: Challenging Constraining Ideologies for Science Teacher Education," 231–56, 2021. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-82973-5_11.
- Inada, Takako. "Teachers' Strategies for Decreasing Students' Anxiety Levels to Improve Their Communicative Skills." *English Language Teaching* 14, no. 3 (February 25, 2021): 32. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v14n3p32>.
- Iversen, Jonas Yassin. "'Translanguaging' and the Implications for the Future Teaching of English in Norway." *Nordic Journal of Modern Language Methodology* 7, no. 1 (January 20, 2020). <https://doi.org/10.46364/njmlm.v7i1.520>.
- Machimana, Petronella NN, and Gerhard Genis. "Translanguaging in the Classroom: A Strategy for English First Additional Language Learning." *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies* 42, no. sup1 (December 6, 2024). <https://doi.org/10.2989/16073614.2024.2387610>.
- Majola, Yanga L.P. "Teachers' Language Attitudes towards the Use of a Nonstandard Variety in the Classroom in Grades 1–3: A Case of IsiBhaca in Umzimkhulu, KwaZulu-Natal." *Literator* 43, no. 1 (October 6, 2022). <https://doi.org/10.4102/lit.v43i1.1884>.
- Masunungure, Appolonia, and Mbulaheni Maguvhe. "Strategies to Enhance the Inclusion of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners in Gauteng Schools: Teachers' Perspectives." *South African Journal of Education* 44, no. 3 (August 31, 2024): 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v44n3a2367>.
- Mokikwa, Hamza, and Moleboheng Mokhele-Ramulumo. "Navigating Language Diversity In

- Multilingual Stem Classrooms: Strategies For Inclusive Education.” *International Education Trend Issues* 2, no. 2 (February 27, 2024): 92–106. <https://doi.org/10.56442/ieti.v2i2.421>.
- Nikolopoulou, K. “What Is Purposive Sampling?| Definition & Examples,” 2022. <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/purposive-sampling/>.
- Nyimbili, Friday, and Leah Nyimbili. “Types of Purposive Sampling Techniques with Their Examples and Application in Qualitative Research Studies.” *British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies* 5, no. 1 (February 16, 2024): 90–99. <https://doi.org/10.37745/bjmas.2022.0419>.
- Otheguy, Ricardo, 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>.
- Pervin, Nasrin, and Mahani Mokhtar. “The Interpretivist Research Paradigm: A Subjective Notion of a Social Context.” *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development* 11, no. 2 (2022): 419–28.
- Qureshi, Muhammad Asif, and Ahmad Aljanadbah. “Translanguaging and Reading Comprehension in a Second Language.” *International Multilingual Research Journal* 16, no. 4 (October 2, 2022): 247–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19313152.2021.2009158>.
- Rajendram, Shakina. “‘Our Country Has Gained Independence, but We Haven’t’: Collaborative Translanguaging to Decolonize English Language Teaching.” *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 42 (March 2, 2022): 78–86. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190521000155>.
- Rosa, Jonathan, and Nelson Flores. “Rethinking Language Barriers & Social Justice from a Raciolinguistic Perspective.” *Daedalus* 152, no. 3 (August 1, 2023): 99–114. https://doi.org/10.1162/daed_a_02020.
- Salie, Maimona, Mokgadi Moletsane, and Robert Kananga Mukuna. “Case Study of IsiXhosa-Speaking Foundation Phase Learners Who Experience Barriers to Learning in an English-Medium Disadvantaged Western Cape School.” *South African Journal of Education* 40, no. 2 (May 31, 2020): 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v40n2a1455>.
- Sefotho, Malephole Philomena. “Strategies for Reading Development among Sesotho-English Bilinguals: Efficacy of Translanguaging,” 2019.
- Spratt, Jennifer, and Lani Florian. “Inclusive Pedagogy: From Learning to Action. Supporting Each Individual in the Context of ‘Everybody.’” *Teaching and Teacher Education* 49 (July 2015): 89–96. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2015.03.006>.
- Steele, Carly, Sender Dovchin, and Rhonda Oliver. “‘Stop Measuring Black Kids with a White Stick’: Translanguaging for Classroom Assessment.” *RELC Journal* 53, no. 2 (August 28, 2022): 400–415. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00336882221086307>.
- Ticheloven, Anouk, Elma Blom, Paul Leseman, and Sarah McMonagle. “Translanguaging Challenges in Multilingual Classrooms: Scholar, Teacher and Student Perspectives.” *International Journal of Multilingualism* 18, no. 3 (July 3, 2021): 491–514. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2019.1686002>.
- Wang, Danping. “Translanguaging in Chinese Foreign Language Classrooms: Students and Teachers’ Attitudes and Practices.” *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 22, no. 2 (February 17, 2019): 138–49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2016.1231773>.
- White, Robert E., and Karyn Cooper. “Case Study Research.” In *Qualitative Research in the Post-Modern Era*, 233–85. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-85124-8_7.
- Xeketwana, Simthembele, and Maureen Robinson. “The Teaching and Learning of IsiXhosa for Communicative Purposes in Teacher Education for the Foundation Phase.” *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, February 23, 2025, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.2989/16073614.2024.2357325>.

ABOUT AUTHOR

Lundi Nomlala holds a doctoral degree in Language Education. He is lecturing at Walter Sisulu University in the Faculty of Education, Humanities and Creative Arts Education Department. He lectures English for the Bachelor of Education Senior Phase and FET students majoring in languages. He has

successfully supervised Bachelor of Education honours students and Master's students. His research interests are language education, school leadership and management, and higher education studies.