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Pedagogical Translanguaging as a Catalyst for Fostering Social Cohesion in Multilingual Schools

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ABSTRACT

Pedagogical translanguaging looks at language practices inside the classroom where more than two languages are present. On the other hand, social cohesion is based on a sense of belonging, where individuals share a common goal. In multilingual schools, social cohesion can only be achieved if measures are implemented to value learners' linguistic repertoires through educators' classroom instructional practices. Hence, this study was anchored in South Africa, where multilingualism is the norm in schools. It seeks to investigate educators' pedagogical translanguaging strategies and how they can catalyze social cohesion in multilingual classrooms. To achieve this, a post-structuralist theory underpinned this study, which posits a need to embrace multilingual pedagogies and the acceptance of all languages. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations with five purposefully selected educators. Results from this study revealed that educators did engage in pedagogical translanguaging practices. They were pleased with the results since learners not only understood the concepts, but they also had a chance to learn their peers' home languages and were able to treat each other's with respect in that regard; educators also revealed that they were not aware that their practices were pedagogical translanguaging; instead, they thought it was code-switching. Hence, this study calls for teacher development in pedagogical translanguaging to raise awareness of its benefits in multilingual classrooms and how it promotes social cohesion.

Keywords: Pedagogical Translanguaging; Social Cohesion; Instructional Practices; Codeswitching; Teacher Development

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1. Introduction

Pedagogical translanguaging has emerged as a significant and innovative approach in multilingual education, challenging traditional monolingual instructional norms. Grounded in the theoretical insights of scholars like Ofeilia García and Li Wei, this approach involves the intentional use of learners' complete linguistic repertoires within the educational process, and it encourages students to utilize all their language resources to construct meaning and engage meaningfully in learning^[1]. Unlike basic codeswitching, which merely alternates between languages, pedagogical translanguaging is a more deliberate and sustained method that enhances learners' cognitive and academic development^[2]. The pedagogical translanguaging approach treats language not only as a tool for instruction but as a vital asset in knowledge construction and learner engagement, particularly within classrooms that serve students from diverse linguistic backgrounds^[3].

On the other hand, social cohesion reflects the level of unity, mutual respect, and shared values within a community^[4]. In educational settings—particularly in multilingual classrooms where diverse language groups co-exist—social cohesion is crucial for promoting a sense of belonging and harmonious relationships among learners^[5]. Meaning that educators who recognize and validate learners' linguistic diversity do more than support academic achievement; instead, they also contribute to nurturing inclusive and unified communities^[6], where learners see their home languages and cultural identities acknowledged in the classroom, and feel more included, whilst benefiting their emotional and social development. Tovaes and Kamwangamalu^[7] assert that when students fully utilize their linguistic resources, they develop stronger identities and a greater sense of belonging, enhancing cooperation and peer learning. Hence, this study seeks to probe into educators' instructional practices in multilingual classrooms and investigate whether educators utilize learners' linguistic repertoires when they teach and are aware of the benefits of using pedagogical translanguaging to promote social cohesion in linguistically diverse contexts.

Problem Statement

Despite the benefits associated with pedagogical translanguaging as a tool for promoting social cohesion, in SA multilingual schools, there is an overarching increase of monolingual approaches that not only silence learners' linguistic repertoires but also impose identities on them that are westernized and marginalize learners' home languages. Amid such challenges with monolingual approaches, pedagogical translanguaging offers a promising pedagogy to promote learners' linguistic repertoires and social cohesion in linguistically diverse classrooms since it is a strategic and deliberate use of more than one language of instruction. Nguyen^[8] notes that there is a need for culturally and linguistically responsive assessment practices as a means of reducing educational inequality and fostering inclusion. Hence, this paper explores educators' instructional practices. Whether there are traces of pedagogical translanguaging in their instructional practices in multilingual classrooms, and to address this problem, this paper was guided by the following questions:

1. What are educators' instructional practices in multilingual classrooms?
2. How do educators accommodate and promote learners' diverse linguistic repertoires in multilingual classrooms?
3. What are educators' views on allowing learners to mix languages during instructional practices?

2. Theoretical Framework

This study was informed by the post-structuralist theory that was proposed by Foucault (1926–1984), and this theory posits that there is a need to resist identities that are being imposed on us by inventing new identities for ourselves through the embracement of multilingual pedagogies and emphasizing the acceptance of all languages^[9]. This framework highlights the importance of embracing multilingual pedagogies and recreating identities. In language education, resisting identities imposed on us entails striving against monolingual instructions when teaching multilingual learners and

allowing learners to use their full linguistic repertoires while opening places to learn other languages from their peers and develop their identities. In relation to this study, applying post-structuralist theory allowed the researchers to investigate to what extent educators utilize multilingual pedagogies, particularly pedagogical translanguaging in class, to accommodate diverse linguistic repertoires and enable learners to formulate their identities through opposing the identities that are imposed on them through monolingual approaches.

Building on this perspective, the post-structuralist framework challenges the traditional, hierarchical views of language and identity by foregrounding the fluidity and multiplicity of linguistic and cultural expressions within the classroom^[10]. It also positions language not as a fixed code tied to a single identity, but as a dynamic and socially constructed resource that learners can draw upon to assert agency and participate meaningfully in learning^[11]. In the context of this study, post-structuralist theory offers a critical lens through which to analyze how educators either reinforce or resist dominant monolingual norms through their pedagogical choices. By encouraging the use of learners' full linguistic repertoires, educators help dismantle exclusionary practices and validate the diverse identities present in multilingual classrooms^[12]. This theoretical orientation is especially relevant in post-colonial education systems like South Africa's, where historical power dynamics shape language policies and pedagogies. Thus, the framework provides a powerful tool to interrogate and transform language practices in education toward more inclusive and socially just outcomes.

3. Literature Review

There is a growing recognition of the link between pedagogical translanguaging and social cohesion in linguistically diverse educational environments. Translanguaging has been proven to cultivate classroom spaces where all languages are respected, fostering mutual appreciation and intercultural understanding among students^[13]. It encourages learners to express themselves in their preferred languages while interacting with others, resulting in classrooms becoming dynamic sites of cognitive development and cultural exchange.

In multilingual South African schools, translanguaging—particularly in pedagogical contexts emerges as a powerful mechanism for advancing social cohesion. This approach

affirms the legitimacy of learners' full linguistic repertoires, challenging the dominance of monolingual instructional practices that often marginalize home languages and, by extension, the learners themselves^[14]. By embracing fluid language practices, translanguaging supports cognitive development and promotes inclusivity by validating diverse linguistic identities^[15]. It facilitates cross-linguistic and cross-cultural collaboration, thereby cultivating classrooms that are both linguistically responsive and culturally democratic^[16]. In a nation committed to dismantling the inequities of its past, pedagogical translanguaging is more than an instructional strategy; it is a socially transformative practice that positions every learner's language and identity as integral to the educational experience and the broader national unity project.

Embedded within translanguaging is pedagogical translanguaging that can be described as a decolonial educational strategy that challenges linguistic hierarchies by legitimizing indigenous languages within formal schooling^[17]. In this sense, pedagogical translanguaging not only supports learning but also affirms linguistic rights and advances social justice, since pedagogical translanguaging is a guided strategy that looks at practices where one language can be used to deliver a message. The other language can be used to respond. In South Africa (SA), pedagogical translanguaging is gaining prominence as a practical response to the shortcomings of the Language-in-Education Policy (LIEP). While the LIEP supports linguistic inclusivity in principle, its implementation often privileges English or Afrikaans as the primary language of teaching and learning (LoLT)^[18]. Thus, most SA schools settle for a monoglossic approach in implementing LIEP, which is also evident in schools switching from either English or Afrikaans from Grade 4 upwards.

Research has shown that translanguaging can effectively bridge the gap between learners' home languages and the LoLT, especially in SA schools where most learners only receive instruction in their home languages in the foundation phase (FP). Gambushe^[19] in his study documented how using isiXhosa alongside English improved academic participation and comprehension in most students. Similarly, Mini and Botha^[20] report that incorporating learners' home languages into classroom instruction in the Eastern Cape led to better understanding and increased confidence. Probyn^[21] also notes that integrating multilingual literacies enhances

inclusive pedagogy. Furthermore, in their study on mathematics classrooms, Malindi et al.^[22] found that translanguaging improved learners' grasp of complex content and promoted teamwork and social cohesion. When teachers intentionally apply translanguaging strategies, they create inclusive classrooms that embrace linguistic diversity and nurture social bonds among learners^[23]. In doing so, schools become more than educational institutions; they evolve into spaces of unity, respect, and democratic engagement within multilingual societies. These findings affirm that pedagogical translanguaging is a comprehensive approach beyond being an instructional tool, since it fosters inclusive, collaborative, and socially connected learning environments^[24]. These examples underscore the educational potential of translanguaging in promoting academic achievement and social cohesion in learners, where all languages are equally valued in educators' instructional practices.

In South Africa, social cohesion within schools is critical in bridging historical divides and fostering an inclusive national identity. Given the country's apartheid legacy, where language functioned as a deliberate instrument of exclusion and division, schools have emerged as vital spaces for rebuilding trust and promoting unity among diverse linguistic and cultural groups^[25]. In this environment, social cohesion extends beyond mere peaceful co-existence; it also entails the active cultivation of a shared sense of belonging, mutual respect, and democratic participation. Schools that promote such cohesion create opportunities for learners from varied racial, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds to engage on equal footing, thereby helping to mitigate the social fragmentation and persistent prejudices that continue to affect South African society^[26]. Encouraging social cohesion in education contributes to interpersonal understanding. It serves as a mechanism for addressing the enduring effects of systemic inequality by fostering empathy, cultural awareness, and intergroup dialogue from an early age^[27].

4. Data Collection Methods

This study adopted a qualitative research approach, and a multiple case study research design was undertaken, where five schools within the Johannesburg North district were selected. A qualitative research approach was deemed necessary for this study since the researcher intended to provide an

interpretation of educators' instructional practices in relation to using pedagogical translanguaging to promote social cohesion in linguistically diverse classrooms. Purposive sampling was used to select five multilingual educators teaching multilingual learners. The focus was on understanding whether educators used pedagogical translanguaging strategically to enhance social cohesion when teaching multilingual learners. For educators to be selected to participate in this study, they had to have ten years of experience teaching multilingual learners and share their expertise in teaching multilingual learners. Semi-structured interviews and classroom observations were conducted to gather data from educators, and classroom observations allowed a researcher to validate educators' responses with field notes from observations and strengthen the rigor of research findings. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the five selected educators to gain in-depth insights into their perceptions, attitudes, and instructional practices regarding pedagogical translanguaging. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to ask pre-determined open-ended questions while also allowing follow-up probing based on participants' responses^[28]. This method effectively uncovered how educators understood and applied translanguaging as a pedagogical tool to foster inclusion and social cohesion in their classrooms. The interviews were conducted in a quiet setting within the school premises, recorded with the participants' consent, and later transcribed for analysis (Ranney, 2015). Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes, ensuring educators had ample opportunity to elaborate on their experiences and classroom strategies.

In addition to interviews, non-participant classroom observations were employed to capture real-time classroom interactions and the practical application of translanguaging strategies^[29]. These observations provided contextual and behavioral data that complemented and validated the interview responses^[30]. A structured observation guide focused on key aspects such as language practices during instruction, learner engagement across linguistic groups, and any observable evidence of social cohesion or exclusion. Field notes were taken during each observation to document relevant interactions, teaching techniques, and classroom dynamics^[31]. Observing multiple lessons in each school ensured a richer, more holistic understanding of how translanguaging was used in varied contexts, thus contributing to the credibility

and triangulation of the study's findings. Data from this study were analyzed thematically, and ethical standards were adhered to by the University of Johannesburg. Participants from this study were informed that participation was voluntary, and pseudonyms were used to refer to responses from the participants to protect their identities.

The data from interviews and classroom observations were analyzed using thematic analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke^[32]. This approach allowed the researcher to move beyond surface-level responses and uncover deeper patterns in how teachers understood and used translanguaging. After transcribing the interviews and writing observation notes, the researcher immersed themselves in the material by reading

it several times to gain a clear sense of the overall picture. From there, meaningful ideas were identified and coded, capturing both teachers' direct accounts and the underlying practices reflected in the classroom.

These codes were gradually combined into broader themes highlighting recurring patterns across the different schools. The themes were then refined to ensure they accurately represented the data and answered the research questions clearly. The final set of themes was written with direct quotes from teachers and supporting evidence from observations, showing how translanguaging was used not only as a teaching strategy but also to foster inclusion and social cohesion in multilingual classrooms (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Coding-to-Theme Development.

Raw Data (Interview/Observation Excerpts)	Initial Codes	Categories	Final Themes
"I code-switch a lot when I teach because learners are multilingual and they understand most of the languages very well." (Ms Mpanza)	Code-switching to aid comprehension	Translanguaging as a teaching strategy	Educators' instructional practices in multilingual classrooms
"Learners also code-switch among themselves; one phrase starts in Sepedi and ends in Zulu." (Mr Ngubo)	Peer translanguaging	Learner collaborative practices	Educators' instructional practices in multilingual classrooms
Observation: A Xitsonga learner was helped by a Pedi learner using Xitsonga explanations. (Field notes, School C)	Peer scaffolding through the home language	Using HL for meaning making	Accommodation and promotion of learners' home languages in class
"We are not expected to promote other languages; we must follow the school language policy, but I sometimes code-switch." (Ms Ndlela)	Restriction by school policy	Tension between policy and practice	Accommodation and promotion of learners' home languages in class
"I don't get upset if learners mix languages. If they feel comfortable, I encourage it." (Ms Mpanza)	Positive acceptance of mixing languages	Normalization of multilingualism	Educators' views on mixing languages
"I allow learners to use home languages, but I ask someone to translate for me." (Ms Ndwandwe)	Acceptance with translation support	Teacher-mediated multilingualism	Educators' views on mixing languages
Observation: Teacher used isiXhosa, isiZulu, and English to explain daily instructions. (Field notes, School A)	Multilingual repetition	Strategic translanguaging	Educators' instructional practices in multilingual classrooms

5. Findings

The following themes emerged from the data collected from participants in this study: Educators' instructional practices in multilingual classrooms; Accommodation and promotion of learners' home language (HL) in class, and Educators' views on Mixing languages.

5.1. Educators' Instructional Practices in Multilingual Classrooms

Educator participants from this study revealed that learners did not speak a standardized language; instead, they

were used to mixing languages when communicating, since they were from townships. Educators mentioned that the lack of proficiency in a standardized language affected their instructional practices because they had to constantly code-switch to indigenous languages when they taught English, since most learners were not proficient in English. However, the schools' language policy promoted it as the LoLT.

Ms Mpanza stated that:

I code-switch a lot when I teach because, luckily, most of these learners are from the Township and multilingual, so they understand most

of the languages very well. Basically, code-switching in my class also works for me and the learners.

Ms Cele added that:

We don't have a choice but to code-switch in class because most of our kids are from the Township, so it happens automatically. For you as a teacher to code switch, because that is how they are used to using the language.

Mr Ngubo noted that:

It's not only me as an educator who code-switches here in class. Even these learners amongst themselves code-switch; you'll hear them during break, and one phrase will start in Sepedi and end in Zulu.

Responses from the educators indicated that their instructional practices in the classroom were affected by learners' background, and they noted that codeswitching to indigenous languages was working for them since learners were not proficient in the LoLT. They were also used to mixing languages from their environments to facilitate meaning and understanding amongst each other. Mr Ngubo and Ms Mpanza also emphasized that codeswitching not only assists educators in class when they teach, but learners also engage in it to converse with their peers in class to pass the message.

Ms Ndlela indicated that:

These learners stay in the Townships; in the Township, they're used to mixing languages and understanding each other. So, whatever these learners say to each other, they understand each other. In my class last year, I had an Xitsonga learner who was struggling with English. Then another learner who knew Xitsonga explained to that Xitsonga learner, and that learner was not Tsonga, he was Pedi, but they understood each other.

The above response from Ms Ndlela was an emphasis and a testimony that she felt using codeswitching benefited both learners and educators. The views presented above indicate that educators did engage in pedagogical translanguaging in their classrooms. It did enforce social cohesion since there was tolerance amongst speakers of different languages, which is also evident in Ms Ndlela's response, where she indicated that learners in her class could assist each other.

However, they spoke different languages and reached a common goal of understanding. Nevertheless, what is evident in educators' responses is that they still referred to pedagogical translanguaging as codeswitching. This terminology misuse indicates a need to raise awareness of the correct terminology and point out the difference between codeswitching and pedagogical translanguaging, which goes beyond switching between two named languages and also looks at the fluidity and flexibility in language use by multilingual speakers.

In conformity with the above responses, researchers observed that educators mix languages strategically when teaching and giving instructions. Ms Mpanza, when she was teaching a life skills lesson, said, "*Ure no or kapa che if motho wants to touch your body*", meaning you say no if someone wants to touch your body without your consent. In other instances, the teacher used African languages to respond to learners and give instructions.

Thando:

Ma'am, do we write today's date on a new page?

Ms Mpanza's response:

Ewe kalokhu bantabami siyayibhala I date yanamhlanje ngaphambi kokuba siqale umsebenzi wosuku.

In this instance, the teacher strategically mixed two Nguni languages (IsiXhosa and IsiZulu) and English to respond to the learner and emphasize to the whole class that they should write today's date before they start writing a new task. This observation confirms that educators did engage in pedagogical translanguaging for different purposes, and it ensured the inclusion of most languages in class, which is a goal of social cohesion.

5.2. Accommodation and Promotion of Learners' HL in Class

This theme focused on discovering to what extent educators' instructional practices acknowledge and accommodate the different languages learners speak when they teach.

Ms Ndlela noted that:

We are not expected to promote and accommodate other languages in our classes; instead, we are expected to follow and teach the languages that are recognized by the school's language policy. However, because of the nature

of our learners here at school, we sometimes find ourselves codeswitching in class to ensure that the message is understood.

Mr Ngubo raised that:

It's not possible to accommodate all the languages spoken by these learners, since they speak many different languages, but I think that through codeswitching, I do try to accommodate them.

Ms Mpanza added that:

I think we can't really embrace all their language in a school setting. We can embrace their cultures through Heritage Day, but languages will be a bit difficult. Nevertheless, I learnt with years of practice that sometimes some concepts, they're too abstract for them to understand or to comprehend, they need a mother tongue jargon to process such concept, therefore I switch where I can, what I do, I explain in English, and I repeat the same phrase in Sepedi, Zulu and English in that way I try to accommodate the different speakers.

Ms Cele added that:

So, as you can see on my wall, there's Afrikaans, English, and Zulu, and most of the things are repeating themselves. The one in English looks like this one in Afrikaans, and it looks like this one in Zulu. These are the only languages present here at school; hence, I only have them up here. And I think in that way, we do try to accommodate them since we do have one African language included here at school.

The responses from educator participants in this study indicated that educators face challenges in accommodating the different languages spoken by the learners since learners were multilingual, so they resort to codeswitching. Mr Ngubo and Ms Mpanza raised that through codeswitching, they try to ensure that they accommodate other indigenous languages, and Ms Mpanza also emphasized that she has noticed that abstract concepts are always difficult to comprehend in an unfamiliar language, hence she codeswitches. These responses indicate that educators know the benefits of pedagogical translanguaging in linguistically diverse classrooms. However, they refer to it as codeswitching. Still,

they are restricted by the schools' language policies that are monoglossic, as highlighted by Ms Ndlela, where she noted that she is supposed to teach languages that are supported by the school's language policy, and such responses raise a concern that there is a need to raise awareness of multilingual pedagogies in schools to cater to and promote indigenous languages.

5.3. Educators' Views on Mixing Languages

The following responses were recorded when educators were asked about whether learners mix languages in class.

Mr Ngubo stated that:

Like I said, these kids are multilingual; they're in Gauteng, and they are exposed to different languages, so I think it's expected of them. So, for that reason, I'm very accepting of that I allow them, I let them be, but I try sometimes when they talk in class, I try to tell them no and stop speaking in Sepedi, try to use English because that is the school's LoLT.

Ms Mpanza indicated that:

I don't get upset. It's a normal thing that happens. I'm not going to bash the child for doing it if that is their way of speaking; If a learner may have an issue with explaining it, and if that child feels comfortable using their home language to try to understand it, I will encourage it. It is OK, I'm not going to stop the child or hinder the child, no.

Ms Ndwandwe added that:

I would allow them to do so just to ensure that the child is comfortable in the class and can express themselves. And then I would, unfortunately, get a learner to translate for me since I do not understand all the languages they speak.

Similarly, Ms Cele raised that:

I think I've adjusted to it now because it's the norm in our school. I've adjusted to it because I used to shout like they will say mam. This one is 'fohling' when someone is cutting the line, and I would say there's no such word as 'fohling' in English, but now I just correct them.

The above responses indicated that the educators embraced learners' multilingualism in class, although they were

unfamiliar with all the languages they spoke. The above responses were validated by classroom observations, where the researchers observed that in instances where an educator was multilingual, they did not correct or ban learners from mixing languages in class during English lessons; instead, they allowed them to use the languages they know strategically to access the curriculum and engage with their peers.

6. Discussions

This study sought to investigate educators' instructional practices in multilingual classrooms and whether educators were aware of the benefits of pedagogical translanguaging as a catalyst to promote social cohesion in multilingual schools. This study utilized a qualitative research approach to answer the question of whether educators utilize and are aware of the benefits of using pedagogical translanguaging to promote social cohesion in linguistically diverse contexts. Findings from this data revealed that educators have engaged with pedagogical translanguaging for different reasons, including enhancing communication and increasing learner agency in the classroom. Surprisingly, they have been referring to it as codeswitching. In relation to the post-structuralist theory, these findings confirm that indeed multilingual pedagogies in the classroom destabilize the monolingual pedagogies and assist in the recreation of new identities where learners embrace who they are through expressing themselves in their respective home languages.

The findings from this study further revealed that learners' backgrounds played a detrimental role in the classroom, since how they use the language in the classroom is affected by how they use it in their social settings. Resulting to educators constantly using pedagogical translanguaging to bridge the gap between home and school, in such instances educators also mentioned that translanguaging also helps them to maintain co-existence between speakers of different indigenous languages in the classroom; because although learners were multilingual they understood each other when they were speaking and the common goal of learning which was understanding was reached through allowing speakers of different languages to engage with each other. And this forms the theoretical underpinnings of translanguaging, where there is an exchange between the language of input and a language of output^[33].

The findings on the accommodation of learners' home languages in the classroom by educators contrasted with the idea of social cohesion being promoted within multilingual classrooms, where all languages were given equal recognition status, whether most learners spoke them or not. Although educators did this spontaneously without any direct intention, their responses pointed out that accommodating learners' diverse languages served as a humanizing pedagogy in multilingual classrooms. The results also revealed that educators did not discriminate against learners who were multilingual in their classrooms; instead, they saw it as the norm, and other educators engaged in the same practices when they were teaching because that is how they were used to using the language through mixing it when they speak.

The perspectives shared in this study highlight that supporting linguistic diversity in the classroom is not only pedagogically sound but also ethically and socially essential, as it enhances learner agency and affirms their identities. The findings revealed that although educators are already engaging with pedagogical translanguaging, they are largely unaware of it and frequently mislabel it as *codeswitching*. Like findings reported by Makalela^[34], this study underscores the persistent misplacement of terminology and the limited awareness of the broader benefits of multilingual pedagogies in South African classrooms. However, the study adds to prior research by demonstrating how translanguaging practices, even when unrecognized, contribute to social cohesion by raising awareness, tolerance, and respect for different languages among learners.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

The originality of this study lies in its focus on the everyday classroom practices of teachers in the South African multilingual schools, particularly in Gauteng, revealing how translanguaging occurs informally within policy-restricted environments. While earlier studies have emphasized translanguaging as a theory and pedagogy^[35,36], this study contributes uniquely by showing how teachers' intuitive practices function as "humanizing pedagogies" that resist monoglossic language ideologies embedded in schools' language policies.

The perspectives shared in this study highlight that supporting linguistic diversity in the classroom is not just

pedagogically sound but also ethically and socially essential since it enhances learner agency. The findings from this study revealed that although educators are engaging with pedagogical translanguageing, they are unaware of it, and there is a misplacement of the terminology used, since educators still refer to it as codeswitching. The educators' practices revealed traces of translanguageing in the classroom, and they demonstrated how it enforces social cohesion through raising awareness, tolerance, and respect for different languages amongst learners. However, due to misuse of incorrect terminology and lack of knowledge of the benefits of multilingual pedagogies, educators still feel guilty when allowing learners to engage in such humanizing pedagogies to enhance their own learning, since schools' application of language policies remains monoglossic.

Despite these encouraging developments, many educators remain unfamiliar with the concept and theory of translanguageing. Findings from this study revealed that while many teachers engage in translanguageing informally, they often misidentify it as spontaneous codeswitching. This indicates a pressing need for targeted professional development that clarifies the principles of pedagogical translanguageing and emphasizes its role in fostering inclusion and cohesion. Adopting translanguageing as a mainstream pedagogical strategy requires a paradigm shift—from seeing multilingualism as an obstacle to recognizing it as a valuable educational resource^[35]. Thus, there is a need for training programs that should aim to provide educators with both the theoretical foundation and practical strategies necessary to use translanguageing purposefully and effectively^[36]. Multilingual teacher training can promote healing and national cohesion by affirming learners' identities and dismantling colonial language hierarchies^[37].

Despite these encouraging insights, several challenges remain. The study confirms that educators continue to feel uncertain, or even guilty, when permitting learners to engage in translanguageing because official school policies privilege monolingual practices. This tension reveals a critical gap between policy and practice, reinforcing what Ramadiro^[37] identifies as the persistence of colonial language hierarchies in education. Moreover, many educators remain unfamiliar with the theoretical principles of translanguageing and its potential to be used purposefully, rather than incidentally. This underscores a pressing need for professional development

that clarifies the concept of translanguageing and provides educators with both theoretical grounding and practical classroom strategies.

It is important to note that this study was conducted solely in Gauteng, limiting its findings' generalizability. Linguistic landscapes, policy enactment, and teacher practices may differ in other provinces with distinct sociolinguistic realities. Future studies conducted across multiple provinces would provide comparative insights and broaden the relevance of findings.

This study recommends establishing targeted professional development programs that explicitly distinguish translanguageing from codeswitching while equipping teachers with theoretical grounding and practical methodologies for classroom implementation^[36]. Such training would empower educators to use translanguageing purposefully, rather than incidentally, thereby maximizing its potential to support learner engagement and achievement. In addition to professional training, there is a pressing need for policy reform. Educational policymakers should consider a shift away from monoglossic orientations towards multilingual policies that are aligned with actual classroom practices and that recognize translanguageing as a legitimate and valuable pedagogy. Furthermore, curriculum integration is essential if translanguageing is to be normalized and legitimized within the education system. Teaching materials and assessment frameworks should systematically incorporate multilingual strategies that promote inclusion, equity, and social cohesion.

Future research should expand beyond Gauteng to examine translanguageing practices across other provinces in South Africa, acknowledging the linguistic and cultural diversity of different regions. Comparative studies would allow a richer understanding of how local contexts shape pedagogical practices. Longitudinal studies are also needed to evaluate the long-term impact of sustained teacher training in multilingual pedagogies on learner outcomes, such as literacy development, confidence, and classroom participation. Moreover, further research should focus on learner perspectives, capturing how translanguageing shapes their identities, sense of belonging, and opportunities for meaningful participation in learning. Together, these recommendations highlight a roadmap towards embedding translanguageing as a transformative and humanizing pedagogy in South African classrooms.

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S.P.N.: Introduction, Theoretical Framework, Data analysis; E.T.N.: Literature reviewer, Methodology, Discussion, Recommendation, and Conclusion. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

The study was conducted in accordance with the University of Johannesburg ethical considerations approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Johannesburg (Ethics: SEM-2- 2024-052), for studies involving humans.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement

Data is unavailable, due to ethical restrictions, since human participants were involved in this study.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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