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# Translanguaging and its Effects on the Teaching- Learning Processes in Multilingual Classrooms in Zimbabwe

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## Abstract

The study examined the impact of translanguaging pedagogy in multilingual classroom environments in Matabeleland South province in Zimbabwe where Kalanga, IsiNdebele and ChiShona co-exist as indigenous languages. The study was specifically conducted in multilingual Mangwe district where translanguaging is inevitable as learners possess diversified mother tongues in the classroom. A qualitative design was employed while the sample that was purposefully chosen comprised four primary teachers, four IsiNdebele secondary teachers, one primary Teacher-in-Charge (TIC), one secondary Head of Department (HOD) and thirty six Form One learners. The sample was relevant and appropriate because it enabled the study to obtain data on the impact of translanguaging pedagogy employed by teachers and learners in multilingual classroom situations. The study was anchored on Postmodernism theory because it provides an appropriate theoretical framework for issues relates to cultural and language developments and diversity in multilingual societies. Key research instruments employed were interviews and observation guides, which were appropriate for gathering data from the participants. Findings from this study reflect that translanguaging is an indispensable strategy in the teaching- learning processes in multilingual communities, where languages are inherently in contact. However, despite its few negative effects, the study emphatically concluded that translanguaging is an effective pedagogy in multilingual classrooms where learners from different backgrounds bring with them diverse mother tongues. Hence, it is recommended that language teachers employ translanguaging pedagogy, as it is applicable to teaching of various languages, to equip learners with skills for navigating multilingual situations.

## Keywords

Translanguaging, Codes-switching, Multilingualism, Indigenous languages, Pedagogic strategy

## INTRODUCTION

Extensive research on the phenomenon of translanguaging in bilingual and multilingual societies has been carried out by linguists and academics. Among the outstanding ones are Gimmins (2008), Gracia (2009) Greese and Blackledge (2010), Lewis, Jones and Baker (2012) and Garcia and Wei (2014), Makalela (2017). According to Duchene et al. (2013), many countries in Africa are punctuated with linguistic diversity which makes these countries multilingual nations. In this respect, Zimbabwe cannot be an exception as it is also a multilingual country with linguistic diversity of indigenous languages such Kalanga, IsiNdebele and ChiShona among several others contained in the constitution but which are not

an issue in this study. In addition to that, it should be noted that languages are community properties, meaning that they are shaped, and shared by the people who speak them while those that are used in the classroom are relevant as they are used to complement or consolidate each other in the teaching of critical concepts.

Since the study hinges on translanguaging which is a common attribute of multilingual societies like Zimbabwe, it is critical at this stage to reflect on the Zimbabwean linguistic situation. Hachipola (2012), states that Zimbabwe is a multilingual country with sixteen (16) spoken languages. Of these languages, until the Amendment of Zimbabwe Constitution, Amendment (No. 20) Act of 2013, English has been the official language, whereas Shona and Ndebele are national languages spoken by 70% and 15% of the population respectively (Peresuh and Masuku 2002). That is, IsiNdebele, Kalanga and ChiShona are among the sixteen of these languages in Zimbabwe. Besides this, Kalanga, IsiNdebele and ChiShona co-exist in Mangwe where Kalanga is the mother tongue, isiNdebele the national language taught as a subject in schools and ChiShona is spoken as a third indigenous language in the district. In view of this language scenario, Translanguaging as a strategy is inevitable since the three languages are simultaneously employed for the benefit of learners whose mother tongue may either be Kalanga or IsiNdebele or ChiShona. The fact that Kalanga, IsiNdebele and ChiShona are languages in contact in Mangwe as they co-exist makes it is inevitable for code-switching and Code-mixing to prevail in teaching and learning processes. Thus, code-switching and code-mixing are used to assist speakers of different languages in the classrooms.

More often, terms translanguaging and code switching have been used interchangeable yet they have conceptual nuances which differentiate the two. In the context of this study, “Translanguaging is a pedagogical tool that spontaneously, dynamically, and functionally integrates more than one language to facilitate and consolidate cognitive processes to promote effective communication, literacy and learning” (Rodrigues 2024: 172). Critical to reflect on this statement is that translanguaging strategy cultivates and enhances thinking and learning processes and also nurtures language and learning skills in learners for success in a multilingual classroom. While code switching has been generally perceived as the alternation between languages in a specific communicative episode (Wei, 2018), Jamshidi and Navehebraim (2013 in Author 2024: 4), define it as “the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence or constituent.” The difference between these concepts is that translanguaging entails the use several languages interchangeably and blending them into a single code whereas this practice differs from code-switching which comprises the use of linguistic registers. Although these concepts are characterised by a degree of superficial overlapping, the study focused and examined the impact of translanguaging pedagogy involving the teaching of IsiNdebele in a multilingual classroom situation also comprising Kalanga and ChiShona indigenous languages

### **Problem statement**

Code-switching to English by teachers in the teaching and learning of IsiNdebele concepts in multilingual classrooms comprising Kalanga and ChiShona learners is questionable and has been a cause for concern in Mangwe District. Linguistically, Kalanga and ChiShona as Bantu languages are closer and more related to IsiNdebele than English which is foreign. While these three indigenous languages are in contact, they are not used in enhancing IsiNdebele concepts but are being overtaken by English which isn't African and/or indigenous. The problem under study is further complicated by that, the failure to recognise and utilise Kalanga and ChiShona in the teaching and learning of IsiNdebele is counterproductive and contradictory to the psychological perception that learners understand concepts better through use of their mother tongue than use of a foreign language. Hence, it is in view of this problematic scenario that the study endeavoured to examine the impact of translanguaging pedagogy on teaching and learning of IsiNdebele in multilingual classrooms in Matabeleland South of Zimbabwe where this problem was detected.

### **Objective of the Study**

The main objective of the research was to examine the impact of translanguaging pedagogy on the teaching and learning of IsiNdebele as a subject in multilingual classroom environments characterised by Kalanga and ChiShona speaking learners particularly in Mangwe

### **Significance of the study**

While reputable and international recognised authors like Gracia and Wei, (2014), Makalela (2015 and 2017), Banda (2017) and Probyn (2021) have written on several aspects of translanguaging involving indigenous languages African communities. In Zimbabwe in particular, research on translanguaging pedagogy involving indigenous languages per se has not been conducted which was a detected gap, yet bilingualism and multilingualism are inherent in African communities as well. Therefore, the study is crucial in that it endeavours to enlighten educators in multilingual societies on the impact of translanguaging in multilingual classrooms and the desire to vary their instructional strategies to cater for learners from diversified linguistic communities. However, this variation would only be effective if the mentality of perceiving English as indispensable in teaching and learning of indigenous languages is decolonised by its removal in multilingual classroom environments. In this sense, the study adds new knowledge in the sphere of education within the context of multilingualism and multiculturalism in African communities. In the process of translanguaging the learners will be exposed to similarities and differences of languages they bring along in the classroom as their mother tongues. Consequently, the study is paramount because it will equip learners with translanguaging skills needed in multilingual classrooms. Of further importance to note in view of this section is that despite that translanguaging is an interpretation of bilingualism and multilingualism, it surfaced as a new concept within bilingual education (MacSwan 2017), while Duarte

(2018) asserts that it was ushered in as an instrument enabling the use of several languages in multilingual classrooms. Therefore, according to Vorgel and Garcia (2017), translanguaging presents a distinct theoretical insight into multilingual education.

### **Origins of Translanguaging**

Translanguaging is considered as not a new concept in sphere of linguistics as it has always been a natural way used by multilingual people to communicate. In other words, when multilingual people use different mother tongues spoken in a particular environment, simultaneously accommodate each other's languages. The crucial point to stress regarding its origins is that translanguaging emerged in the 1980s in Bangor, North Wales when Cen Williams and colleagues were investigating strategies for learners to use two languages Welsh and English in a single lesson. (Lewis, et al 2012). Baker further translated the term translanguaging into English and from then the term expanded to cover the use of many languages in many contexts (Lewis et al 2012). Major related terms used interchangeably with translanguaging are polylanguages and flexible multilingualism. However, in this research the focus was on the general term translanguaging and its effects on the teaching- learning processes in multilingual Mangwe district.

### **VIEWS OF SCHOLARS ON TRANSLANGUAGING**

While translanguaging has been researched about in the field of linguistics, examined in the study are issues in connection with the definition, importance and effects of translanguaging among others. Therefore, this section focuses on scholarly views on translanguaging issues.

The term translanguaging is referred to as the use of different languages together which can be an effective tool for learning but it can also go against the grain for language teachers who are used to supporting learners to master the intricacies of a single language. For Garcia & Wei (2014), translanguaging refers to the process by which bilingual students perform bilingually in the myriad ways of classrooms. In the same vein, translanguaging across the boundaries of named languages is understood as a language practice that is valuable and useful for bilingual speakers and bilingual learners (Woodley & Brown, 2016). Crucial to realise, is that it involves the application of various languages in a multilingual situation. The rationale being to access different linguistic features by bilingual learners in order to maximise communicative potential.

Erdin and Sally (2020) who conducted a study titled 'Translanguaging: Insights into its Theoretical Underpinnings and Classroom Implications.' perceive Translanguaging as a comparatively new example of such endeavours, daring the L2 major linguistic classrooms and the idealised standing of domestic speaker teachers. In this respect, authors suggest that both L1 and L2 can be used in harmony in class, which would yield possible results in terms of language acquisition. Therefore, this study aimed at providing insights into theoretical underpinnings and classroom implications of translanguaging, which has been receiving increasingly more attention in recent years. The study revealed that "Translanguaging aims to create a single linguistic repertoire to make meaning and to negotiate particular communicative contexts." (Vogel and Garcia 2017, 1). Implied here is that Translanguaging refutes the over use of target language but embraces the use of mother tongue among other languages within that multilingual society, something indicating that several languages can work well together for the benefit of consolidation of learnt concepts. However, the use of different languages should be done in a systematic way as suggested by translanguaging. The study concludes by stating that as opposed to alternating use of independent language systems, translanguaging maintains that learners benefit from a single semiotic repertoire that integrates different linguistic features pertaining to lexis, morphology and grammar.

Another study on translanguaging was conducted by Sapitri et al (2018) and is titled 'Functions of the teachers' translanguaging in EFL at two Junior High Schools at Singaraja.' The intention of the research was to find out the functions of the EFL teachers of translanguaging and the teachers' reasons for the use of translanguaging. Major findings in this article revealed functions to do with knowledge of construction, followed by classroom management, and interpersonal relations. (Sapitri et al 2018). Other critical functions of the teachers' use included to facilitate students' understanding, to provide L1 and TL comparison, to elicit students' responses, to attract students' attention, to manage students, to promote discipline, to develop deeper personal relationship, to create secure classroom atmosphere, and to make the class more interesting. Deduced from these multiple functions is that they cover several aspects of multilingual classroom situation. In this regard, translanguaging seems to be an effective strategy to cement the division between languages by emphasising their overlapping rather than promoting their division. In relation to the harmonious relationship in the use of multiple languages advocated by translanguaging, Garcia and Seltzer (2016, 25) state that "it constitutes the opportunity of educational equality in bilingual instruction as native speakers are not privileged anymore; on the contrary, by focusing on speakers' linguistic repertoire, all languages are present in class and 'appear in conversation with each other'" In this context, translanguaging exposes over use of L1 in a multilingual classroom as yielding negative impact, something that should be avoided as different learners bring their own mother tongues like in a multilingual classroom in Mangwe.

A book chapter by Makalela (2017) titled 'Moving out of linguistic boxes: the effects of translanguaging strategies for multilingual classrooms' in a 'Book Language in Epistemic Access.' This chapter centered on an investigation into the efficacy of a teacher preparation programme that introduced the teaching of African languages to speakers of other African languages in order to produce multi-competent and multi-vocal teachers. (Makalela 2017). Implicit from the objective of the chapter is to ensure that teachers are equipped with multilanguage skills which are a

requisite in handling learners from diversified language experiences in multilingual classroom setting. Of importance to observe from the chapter is that the results of the study highlight that translanguaging techniques used in the experimental class provided the participants impactful and social advantages as well as a thorough comprehension of the learnt material. In this context translanguaging pedagogy in the multilingual classroom is more appropriate and efficient as its use is advantageous to learners with different cultural and linguistic influences.

The Impact of Translanguaging on the EFL Competence Development of Arabic Speaking Learners is the title of the study carried out by Elashhab (2020). This study scrutinised the effect that the use of translanguaging strategies has on bilingual learners and to discover whether or not these strategies support their English language development. Findings revealed that “translanguaging did promote the growth of students’ English language and developed their communication in the target.” (Elashhab 2020, 2). That is, the students and the teacher often collaborate in translanguaging as a tactic to sustain meaningful dialogue and accomplish their communicative and learning goals. Translanguaging in class was revealed as one of a set of several practices that EFL teachers boosted to support the participation of the beginners. In the same vein, Arthur and Martin (2006) in Elashhab (2020, 404), argue that “accepting answers in any language gave students strength in their language choices and allowed for participation from a wider range of students than would have been possible in English only.” An important implication for teachers in EFL classrooms is that translanguaging can be used as a tactic to facilitate meaningful content learning while another is that teachers can build on students’ translanguaging tactics to further facilitate vocabulary and language learning. Realised from these findings and/or implications is that “Translanguaging is a process whereby multilingual speakers use all of their languages for arguing, asking questions, providing answers, or participating in any other form of communication in the classroom.” (Elashhab 2020, 410). In conclusion, this study reflects that the flexible use of two or more languages in the same lesson can serve a number of communicative purposes, and the use of all linguistic repertoires flexibly may help the development of the target language. Hence, the use of different languages in a multilingual classroom environment like Mangwe is commendable since it promotes the development of even other varieties in the process of the development of IsiNdebele as a target language.

Apparent from the cited journal articles regarding translanguaging, is that this concept is not only a pre-requisite but an indispensable educational practice in multilingual communities of Mangwe District where the study was located as Kalanga, IsiNdebele and ChiShona co-exist and simultaneously used in the classrooms.. Through this pedagogic strategy, learners in a multilingual Mangwe classrooms benefit from integration of different linguistic features inherent in the language structures. Thus, on the basis of these highlighted scholarly views in cited journals, translanguaging is considered as an effective pedagogic strategy in that through it both educators and learners sustain meaningful conversations and achieve their communicative and learning goals in multilingual communities like Mangwe

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Theoretical framework is perceived as a blue print or guide for research (Grant and Osanloo in Adom et al 2018). It also frames how the researcher/instrument will collect, analyse and discuss the findings, in addition to how you discuss the related literature. (Adom et.al 2018). In this context, theoretical framework is embracive as it encompasses such critical elements of research. The suitable theory chosen for this particular study was postmodernism because it provides an appropriate theoretical framework for issues to do with cultural and language developments in society. According to Muchenje, et al (2013), postmodern theoretical perspective appreciates differences in society. They further disclose that several countries in Africa are featured with linguistic distinction which makes these countries multilingual nations. As Zimbabwe is a multilingual country, this study was mainly advised and directed by the postmodern theory because it was considered the most relevant in examining the effects of translanguaging in the teaching-learning processes involving IsiNdebele, Kalanga and ChiShona which constitute a typical multilingual scenario obtaining in Mangwe District where IsiNdebele is taught as a subject. Thus, this study cannot down-play the application of postmodern theory since Mangwe is a multilingual district where translanguaging involving IsiNdebele, Kalanga and ChiShona somehow has an effect on the teaching-learning processes of IsiNdebele in schools characterised by different languages. As already reflected in the preceding paragraphs, translanguaging involves the use of various languages in a multilingual classroom situation. Therefore, the simultaneous use of various linguistic varieties sustain meaningful conversations and achieve learning goals in diverse or multilingual communities like in Matabeleland South.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a qualitative research design which was based on semi- structured interviews and observation guides. According to Bhebe, (2025), this research design was suitable as it solicited views, insights, reasons and opinions from the participants and gathered data of words. These instruments were compatible with the research design and appropriate for gathering data from HOD, TIC, IsiNdebele teachers and learners who were key participants in the study. Data was sourced through the exploration of impact and effects of translanguaging pedagogy in a multilingual classroom setting where Kalanga and ChiShona are simultaneously translanguaged in the process of teaching and learning of IsiNdebele as subject in Mangwe district of Matabeleland South in Zimbabwe.

### **Research Design**

“In any study, a research design is inevitable as it provides guidelines that are a pre-requisite to conducting research.” (Author 2022, 43). From the types of research designs which incorporate quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods



frequent in the domain of research, this study employed the qualitative one. In describing qualitative research, Creswell (2009, 39) asserts that, "Qualitative research is a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the views of participants, asks broad, general questions, collects data consisting largely of words (or text) from participants, describes and analyses these words for themes and conducts the enquiry in a subjective, biased manner." Therefore, the study adopted a qualitative approach that seeks views, insights and opinions from the respondents and gathers data comprising of terms from the respondents pertaining to translanguaging and its effects in multilingual classroom environments such as Mangwe district where Kalanga, IsiNdebele and ChiShona are used in the implementation of Translanguaging as a teaching pedagogy in order to embrace learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

### **Population**

According to Best and Khan (2014), population is the total of all individuals who have certain characteristics that are of attention to the investigator and to whom he or she would like to generalise the results of study. In concurrence, Fraenkel and Wallen (1996, 92), define population as "a group of interest to the researcher, the group to whom the researcher would like to generalise the results of the study." In this study the population comprised primary and secondary teachers, TIC, HOD and learners who responded to interviews different questions on the importance of translanguaging and its effects.

### **Sample and Sampling procedures**

"Since the investigation could not include all the individuals, sampling was therefore, inevitable." (Author and Thwala 2019, 5). Cohen and Manion (2011, 510), define a sample as "a subset of a population or a group of participants carefully selected to represent that group of participants." The study thus, focused on four primary teachers, four secondary teachers, one TIC and one IsiNdebele HOD from one primary and one secondary schools respectively. These participants were, however, purposively selected for the study on the basis of their knowledge and experiences in relation to the problem under investigation. The researcher intentionally chose who to involve in the research basing on their professional status and potential to supply essential information. In other words, it was inevitable to encompass stated participants as they provided anticipated data regarding translanguaging and its effects in multilingual classrooms consisting IsiNdebele, Kalanga and ChiShona which are in contact in Mangwe in the teaching and learning of IsiNdebele.

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS**

In presenting and analysing data, individual themes emerged from gathered data and hinged on the following critical issues:

- Rationale behind use of translanguaging pedagogy
- Frequency of translanguaging
- Effects of use of translanguaging pedagogy
- Analysis of impact of translanguaging pedagogy

Collected data involved responses to conducted interviews and observed lessons from respondents who comprised HOD, TIC, teachers and learners during the study. Provided data revolved around rationale behind translanguaging, frequency of translanguaging, effects of translanguaging and the impact of translanguaging as pedagogy. Conducted interviews involved ten respondents who were purposively sampled so as to obtain desired data on the impact of translanguaging involving IsiNdebele, Kalanga and ChiShona in multilingual classroom schools. The chosen participants were appropriate for this study because they were purposefully selected and had the capacity to notice the impact and effects of translanguaging on the teaching and learning of IsiNdebele in multilingual communities of Matabeleland South region. However, similar questions were asked across different participants in order to obtain authentic, valid and reliable data.

The gender of sampled participants from the selected primary and secondary schools consisted of five males and five females. This was not coincidental but deliberate as the sampling was purposefully done so as to gather data from a gender balanced target population. Besides the gender, the study checked on the issue of multilingualism from the same participants. All the respondents were multilingual as they were able to converse in all languages co-existing in Mangwe district. These languages were IsiNdebele, Kalanga and ChiShona. The secondary teachers and the HOD were Kalanga speakers who majored in IsiNdebele at Teachers' College while primary school teachers and the TIC had Kalanga as their mother tongue but learnt IsiNdebele at secondary which makes them competent in it since it is their second indigenous language. In addition to Kalanga and IsiNdebele, these primary and secondary school teachers happen to speak ChiShona whose influence is largely felt in most parts of the country due to the spread of ChiShona people whose numbers are statistically around eighty percent of Zimbabwean population. Consequently, their purposeful inclusion in the study had a positive impact as they are able to apply translanguaging strategy in the teaching of IsiNdebele to learners from this multilingual Mangwe community.

Revealed during the interviews was that translanguaging occurs in IsiNdebele classroom lessons. This was unavoidable as classes in both primary and secondary had learners whose mother tongue was Kalanga but learnt with IsiNdebele and ChiShona speakers since these languages co-exist in multilingual Mangwe district. In order to concretise, explain, illustrate and emphasise taught IsiNdebele concepts, these three indigenous languages were employed as they accommodated all the learners. In this context, translanguaging as a strategy is essential because it embraces all the

learners in multilingual classroom situations which is not the case if teachers confine themselves to IsiNdebele which is taught as a subject ahead of Kalanga and ChiShona which are also mother tongues of other learners.

In response to the critical question about the rationale behind translanguaging in IsiNdebele lessons, respondents provided several reasons. Three of the respondents felt the rationale is to improve learner participation in their mother tongue. Followed were reasons from the two participants who articulated the rationale to do with promotion of multilingualism in situations where languages are in contact and preservation of minority languages by using them alongside majority ones. Reasons related to supporting learners at every language stage of their education, like tolerance and use of other languages in class lessons and enhancement of cross-lingual transfer skills in class lessons came from the remaining five respondents. Apparent from the furnished reasons for translanguaging is that they are divergent in nature and an indication of their authenticity in justifying its relevance in a multilingual Mangwe district.

Major effects of translanguaging in multilingual classrooms emerged during the interviews. Paramount to observe across the given responses is that they were mainly positive, except for one which was negative. It was negative in that translanguaging is perceived as confusing. The confusion is assumed to be on how learners can use three indigenous languages in addition to English Language at the same time, yet they have different linguistic backgrounds. As a result of this confusion, a lot of time is wasted in an attempt to cater for all indigenous languages despite limited time for learning. On the contrary, positive effects were about promotion of active participation, enhancement of understanding of critical concepts and expression of complex ideas. Deduced is that translanguaging is an effective pedagogic strategy that can be employed in a multilingual classrooms.

An observation instrument was also employed to collect data from a conducted lesson so as to validate findings obtained through conducted interviews. Since it is recommended that the observations should take place in a natural setting, lesson observation was carried out in a Form One usual classroom. Observed was IsiNdebele lesson titled ‘*Ubuhlobo emulini*’ (Relationship in the family). The researcher felt the topic was suitable for the Form level since it was directly linked to their experiences as they belonged to families made up of different members. The observed lesson was guided by the following key objective to:

- identify words that mostly featured as the teacher and learners translanguaged in the lesson
- detect the frequency of translanguaging during the lesson observation
- explain the rationale for translanguaging across indigenous languages during the lesson.
- analyse the impact of translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy in the multilingual classroom

**Table 1** Terms from the three languages that featured during translanguaging in IsiNdebele lessons N=10

IsiNdebele terms	Kalanga terms	ChiShona terms	English translation
<i>Ugogo</i>	<i>Kuku</i>	<i>Mbuya</i>	Grandmother
<i>Isijeza</i>	<i>Nhopi</i>	<i>Nhopi</i>	Pumpkin porridge
<i>Isamba</i>	<i>Kwama</i>	<i>Chikwama</i>	Pocket
<i>Umamomncane</i>	<i>Mayinini</i>	<i>Mainini</i>	Maternal aunt
<i>Umkhongi</i>	<i>Dombo</i>	<i>Munyai</i>	Marriage negotiator
<i>Umalume</i>	<i>Basekulu</i>	<i>Sekuru</i>	Maternal uncle
<i>Ukwenelisa</i>	<i>Kukwanisa</i>	<i>Kukwanisa</i>	To be able
<i>Amanga</i>	<i>Manyephwa</i>	<i>Nhema</i>	Lies
<i>Beletha</i>	<i>Bhabha</i>	<i>Bereka</i>	Carrying on one's back
<i>Ubaba</i>	<i>Ntate</i>	<i>Baba</i>	Father

Above is a reflection of common terms across cited indigenous languages that were captured during the observed IsiNdebele lesson in a multilingual classroom. Interesting, to note about the concepts is that the Kalanga and ChiShona ones are either identical or related in structure and pronunciation while most of IsiNdebele ones are different, yet the three co-exist as indigenous languages. Furthermore, all IsiNdebele nouns in the table except for a verb “*beletha*” (carrying on the back) are nouns pre-fixed with initial vowels which is not the case with Kalanga and ChiShona languages respectively. Also observed on the table is that words from three languages with the common English meaning as ‘marriage negotiator’ and ‘lies’ are completely different from each other despite that these are Bantu languages which co-exist in a multilingual Mangwe. Implied from the table contents is that translanguaging is an effective pedagogic strategy as it benefits learners across the languages in their grasping of linguistic concepts. Also, translanguaging as a teaching pedagogy isn’t discriminatory but accommodates learners from different linguistic backgrounds. Precisely, as presented by McCracken (2017), translanguaging is an important language-learning tool that opens up an educational space for both multiple languages and identities to thrive side-by-side.

Regarding the featuring of translanguaging in the observed lesson, it was evident that the teachers’ prevalence was moderate while that of the learners was regular as they unconsciously used the three languages simultaneously in this multilingual classroom. Noted in the observation about the frequency of translanguaging by both the teacher and the learners is that it fluctuated depending on the issues that emerged. Similarly, Bhebe (2022) asserts that, the frequency relied on the essence of challenges. Further observed was that learners were thrilled by translanguaging over unrelated concepts such as ‘*amanga*/IsiNdebele’, ‘*nhema*/ChiShona’ and ‘*manyephwa*/Kalanga’, (lies). Therefore, their intention of using their mother languages in grasping IsiNdebele concepts is an indication that translanguaging is unavoidable as a teaching pedagogy in a multilingual classroom.

Revealed from the lesson observation in a multilingual classroom was that translanguaging strategy is inevitable due to several reasons. Translanguaging that prevailed during the lesson was meant to encourage active participation of learners since they were using Kalanga and ChiShona which are their mother tongue in IsiNdebele lessons. Also noticed during the lesson was that the teacher and learners translanguaged when it was critical to do so. In the course of the lesson, realised was that the teacher would not hesitate to code-switch each time learners grappled to convey themselves in IsiNdebele as to some of them it was not their mother tongue. For instance, in expressing and elaborating IsiNdebele concept “*umkhongi*” (marriage negotiator) which was rather strange to Kalanga, ChiShona and to some of IsiNdebele learners, the teacher translanguaged to Kalanga ‘*dhombo*’ and ChiShona ‘*munyai*’ substitutes before explaining that ‘*usodombo*’ (marriage negotiator) which all along has been associated with IsiNdebele as not originally IsiNdebele but a product of phonologising Kalanga word into IsiNdebele. This negative effect of the phonologisation is echoed by Author (2022: 122) who states “Thus, the Ndebelerised ‘*usodombo*’ has been ultimately accepted as part of the language vocabulary while the original IsiNdebele word ‘*umkhongi*’ is greatly threatened by extinction due to the fact that it is not regularly used.” However, while the positive rationale of translanguaging cannot be over stated, its weakness is in that, the strategy is time consuming as using all the indigenous languages at the same time takes a lot of time and is somehow confusing if not properly used. Therefore, the pedagogy cannot be employed for teaching examination classes since covering of the syllabus on time will be impossible. Besides its weakness of time consuming, data that distinctly featured is that translanguaging is an indispensable pedagogy which works effectively well in multilingual classroom situation in African communities where learners bring along diversified indigenous languages and their variants. The implementation of translanguaging as a teaching and learning pedagogy creates confidence and self-esteem as it consolidates learners’ linguistic and cultural identities since they are from diversified African cultural backgrounds. This concurs with Makalela’s (2015) result from conducted case studies of translanguaging practices involving one institution of higher and another in the intermediate phase. Shown in them is that the use of several by multilingual learners in the classroom environment affords cognitive and social advantages for them which make their learning more effective if compared to the use of only one language which may be divorced from their native language. Further deduced from the findings is that translanguaging pedagogy enables learners to access learning material more easily and interact effectively in classroom activities

### Views on translanguaging in multilingual communities

From the carried out study it was found that teachers who participated in interviews unconsciously used the translanguaging strategy in the teaching of IsiNdebele in a multilingual Mangwe district. The study established that the major reason for the teachers’ translanguaging was to enhance learners’ understanding of concepts by employment of all the indigenous languages spoken in this multilingual community. Strengths and weaknesses of translanguaging as a strategy were highlighted and basically comprised its functions regarding understanding, clarification, emphasis, illustrations, all promoting and providing instruction which is crucial in the teaching and learning in a multilingual class. The failure to get equivalent words in the target language and expansion of languages in multilingual classes were also stated as main reasons for use of translanguaging strategy in teaching learners in a multilingual environment. Despite these strengths, the translanguaging strategy is also punctuated by weaknesses like compromising proficiency in all languages in the multilingual community and disruption in using of the target language. Observed from the findings is that teachers were patient and considerate in the handling of translanguaging strategy in multilingual communities where all the indigenous languages are used for the benefit of learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds. In this regard, use of translanguaging as a strategy is inevitable in communities where different languages are in contact like in multilingual districts where IsiNdebele, Kalanga and ChiShona languages are interchangeably spoken in the area.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings made in this research yielded recommendations for improving translanguaging in teaching and learning of IsiNdebele in multilingual classrooms. Problem areas requiring attention and improvement have been detected and the following recommendations are made:

- The study recommends that for translanguaging to be a reality in the multilingual classroom, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should ensure that indigenous languages policy issues are fully implemented rather than remain at theoretical level.
- Teachers training colleges should focus on effective pedagogies like translanguaging for teaching linguistically diversity learners and providing teachers with techniques for working in multilingual classrooms.
- Through respective district education offices, Staff – Development programmes should be initiated to facilitate in-servicing of already trained teachers in handling of lessons through translanguaging pedagogy in multilingual classroom contexts.
- Teachers are discouraged from over using English in multilingual contexts but employ translanguaging pedagogy that is applicable to the teaching of various languages as a means of equipping learners with requisite skills to explore multilingual situations
- It is advocated that language teachers need to assess the impact of translanguaging on the teaching and learning of targeted indigenous languages in multilingual communities in the country other than in Mangwe district where this study has been undertaken. Findings from this evaluation, will enable teachers to avoid negative effects of

translanguaging as a teaching pedagogy in their classes made up of learners from multilingual communities and with different language backgrounds.

## CONCLUSION

The conducted study examined the impact of translanguaging pedagogy and its effects on the teaching-learning processes in multilingual contexts. Findings revealed translanguaging as an effective strategy which affords learners the opportunity to participate freely using their indigenous languages in a diversified linguistic learning environment. Divulged in this research is that translanguaging pedagogy is engrossed with both merits and di-merits which are crucial to the teacher who uses the pedagogy in multilingual classroom communities. However, from the highlighted effects of translanguaging strategy, positive ones clearly outweigh the main negative effect which is perceived as pedagogically confusion, is when varied languages would be simultaneously used in teaching learners with different mother languages in a multilingual classroom. On the contrary, positive ones like enhancement of critical concepts through learners' first languages and expression of complex ideas cannot be overstated since they are beneficiary in teaching-learning processes. Therefore, translanguaging is perceived as an effective pedagogy to be used in multilingual classroom environments because it creates confidence and self-esteem which consolidates learners' diversified linguistic and cultural identities.

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## DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by author(s).

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