

## **Multilingual performances of grade six immigrant learners: An examination of translanguaging as a transformative approach**

### **Abstract**

The aim of this study was to investigate the utility of translanguaging in transforming the learning of multilingual immigrant children from other African countries in South Africa. This is a South-South immigration situation where horizontal migration creates complex linguistic climates in the classrooms. This situation has been addressed through the administration of multilingual tutorials. Two theories are discussed: the translanguaging theory and Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia to explain how they relate to the immigrants' linguistic practices. Through a mixed-methods study design, an explanatory sequential design was followed. A double t-test was used to determine the performances of the learners at the experimental school and at the control school before the intervention. The translanguaging intervention was administered only at the experimental school to 56 immigrant learners. To augment data from the t-test the interviews, observations, multilingual tutorials, and stimulated recalls were done with four teachers, grade six immigrant learners, and two principals. The main finding of the study is that translanguaging when used with immigrant children is an effective pedagogy for decolonizing, for cross bordering, cross-cultural bordering, and for epistemic and identity affirmation of multilingual children. In the current study, it has proved to be a more effective pedagogy, and it is recommended for use in the context of the study. Translanguaging can be a useful tool for learner integration, and it is also important to enhance teacher expertise in order to meet the 21<sup>st</sup> multilingual complexity which includes immigrant languages. Translanguaging is a more transformative strategy and can disrupt the traditional ideologies that may have been acquired by the teachers and administrators during their teacher training. These traditional methodologies do not match the current linguistic needs of the classrooms. However, there is a need for a model for teacher training that is based on the principles of the translanguaging pedagogy so as to effectively engage with language issues of the South-South migration. It is further recommended that policies move away from strict conceptions of languages and, in the host countries of the immigrants, to much more dynamic and flexible policies that allow language repertoires rather than single languages. Finally, there is a need for further research to explore the effectiveness of translanguaging on the teacher where the teachers are trained to deliver it over a much longer time and are able to handle this by themselves.

### **Keywords**

Translanguaging, multilingual tutorials, immigrant learners, ubuntu translanguaging, heteroglossia.