

Translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy in Mauritius Higher Education System

A thesis submitted by:

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melanie Lee Ah Soon', written in a cursive style.

Melanie LEE AH SOON

17th March 2025

Dedication

To my mother, Anne-Marie, for everything that you have done for me, for all of us, this is for you. I aspire to be the human that you are. You are self-less and the kindest, most generous person I know. For all the times that you said, “don’t worry, everything will be okay” – this is for you. You have always supported my choices in pursuing a tertiary education even when you were not entirely sure which direction I was going in. I could list the sacrifices that include the insane amount of driving you did for me, and all the money you invested in me, but the truth is that there are not enough pages that could show my appreciation and gratitude for being my Mami, for just being you. I cry tears of thankfulness for all of it. I hope that you know that YOU are my hero. This is for everything you are and everything you do. Merci Mami.

To my favourite human, the brightest light and kindest soul, my godchild, Marcelline, my niece, you at the very core of my heartbeat. I have yet to know a greater love than yours. Thank you being in my corner, for being my loudest and fiercest cheerleader. May you always revere learning as growth, in any shape it takes. I dedicate this to you. To my sister, Mary-Jade, thank you for always being there for me, for defending me, for supporting me in every way. This is for you.

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To my Papi and Ferfer, who were gone way too soon there is not a time that I do not imagine you here with us. To my late Koung Koung and Popo, I know the two of you would have printed this in the Chinese newspaper in Mauritius. I always felt you bursting with pride long before this time. I wish you could be here, and I hope you are proud. I love and miss you every day. This is for you.

Abstract

The studies reporting on the adaptive pedagogical practices for multilingual higher education contexts seem to be increasing as researchers report on the advantages of translanguaging practices for academic success and better access to knowledge. Mauritius, with its rich history, has long been involved in multilingual practices, reflecting a continuum of speech repertoires that facilitate fluid translingual encounters. Creole contexts, like Mauritius, exemplify the complexities of multilingual speakers. Yet, in this multilingual Creole context, research on translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy in higher education is still in its infancy, with existing studies often focusing more on social justice factors.

This study explored the role of translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy in the higher education context of Mauritius to better understand the ways in which students negotiated meaning and navigated content. Using a mixed methods approach, the study involved focus-group interviews and a survey with first-year undergraduate students from four disciplines at two selected institutions of higher learning. The findings suggest that translanguaging was frequently employed and effectively used to enhance understanding and learning in all disciplines, with remarkable use of linguistic and semiotic resources. The prevalence of translanguaging also revealed the importance of cultural and linguistic identities nested within the complexities of the Mauritian identity.

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Chapter One

General Introduction and Background to the Study

In the 21st century, multiple language practices in teaching and learning have become more common, demonstrating the use of multilingual literacies at different levels of the education sectors across the globe (Alzahrani, 2019; Charamba, 2020; Galante, 2020; Hungwe, 2019; Kirsch, 2020; Li & Luo, 2017, Wei Li & García, 2022). Multilingual practices have used translanguaging as a concept to describe multilingual contexts.

Translanguaging can be described as an approach to multilingualism that provides a platform or space for multilingual speakers to use their repertoire. It is a view wherein all the languages spoken by those who are multilingual are conceptualised as one operational unit. In multilingual contexts, translanguaging theory has become a concept used often to describe the multilingual speaker's ability to express themselves using their rich linguistic repertoire.

This approach has led to pioneering pedagogical practices that are celebrated worldwide among varying multilingual environments (Adamson & Coulson, 2015; Canagarajah, 2011a; Canagarajah, 2015; García & Sylvan, 2011; Li Wei, 2011, Makalela, 2015; Probyn, 2015, Li Wei & García, 2022). There is evidence of a growing body of literature that recognises the advantages of such practice in multilingual educational contexts (Cahyani et al., 2016; García & Wei, 2014; Makalela, 2015).

Consequently, for the last 20 years, research in the field of multilingual education has come to acknowledge the need for innovative primary and secondary schooling programmes that use more than one language for teaching and learning. For instance, in language acquisition in the United States, adolescents drew upon English and Spanish to expand learning opportunities in an inventive and interesting way (Martin-Beltrán, 2014). For content-based learning disciplines, such as Science, translanguaging has been used to ease learning for scholars who are in rural areas and townships of South African primary schools (Probyn, 2015).

These translanguaging practices have revealed fluid and mutual affordances for language learning among linguistically diverse peers as well as providing additional successful learning opportunities. These successful and dynamic practices for multilingual contexts have called for

translanguaging frameworks that uncover the value system of African contexts. Makalela (2016) makes a case for “ubuntu translanguaging”, which is described as a “disruption of linguistic boundaries and the simultaneous recreation of new ones” (2016, p. 191). This model is grounded in the African belief and value system and translated here as: I am because we are; we are because I am (Makalela, 2016, p. 191). The ubuntu translanguaging framework is directly related to teaching and learning in complex multilingual encounters.

Studies in the field of multilingualism have shown that translanguaging provides a useful resource for multilingual learners. Such studies that have implemented or used translanguaging strategies and practices in the broad school sectors reveal that issues relating to identity, facilitating a deeper understanding of content, and access to knowledge are being resolved in multilingual communities around the world (Cenoz & Santos, 2020; Karlsson et al., 2019), including schools in Sub-Saharan Africa (Goia et al., 2019). Likewise, in higher education contexts, issues around access to knowledge, learning through other languages, and identity affirmation have been educational matters affiliated to the translanguaging narrative worldwide (Alzahrani, 2019; Asfour et al., 2020; Galante, 2020; Wang, 2020). At the higher education level, several studies have also looked at similar aspects of how translanguaging pedagogies are negotiated in higher education, specifically in the Global South (Mazak & Carroll, 2016).

Varying educational contexts have explored the translanguaging phenomenon as a framework or platform for teaching and learning practices. This investigation extends the translanguaging agenda to the Creole speaking context of Mauritius. The very definition of Creole subscribes to the blending of languages in a naturalised way and, as such, Creole speaking contexts are known to possess an inherent multilingual status.

It is noteworthy that there are other distinctive contexts that require investigation. More poignantly, there is a need for translanguaging studies to unearth how Creole speaking students (trans)language across the curriculum at university level. The present study, therefore, seeks to bring to light how students navigate issues of acquiring content and identity through multilingual practices in the higher education spaces of the Mauritian higher education context. The study specifically investigates translanguaging in higher education of the Mauritian context. Its focus is on tertiary students who are first years at a comprehensive university.

Studies in Creole contexts often focus on the inequalities and injustices borne from their colonial historical pasts (Siegel, 2007). With specific reference to multilingual Creole contexts within the islands of Indian-Oceanic regions, a considerable amount of attention has been given to language inclusion and social justice. These environments have often explored the challenges in relation to multilingual encounters in education policy and classrooms, often resulting in the separation of languages. While some studies reflect the importance of the inclusion of Creole in education (Siegel, 2007), it is also marked that multilingual encounters are completely natural even if there is an apparent monolingual bias or a form of language supremacy present (García, 2014).

To date, research in the Creole contexts where there is creolisation, has focused on social justice with arguments for the introduction or use of Creole as a formal language in teaching and learning in school. Indian-Oceanic regions, such as Seychelles and La Reunion, have explored the challenges in relation to multilingual encounters in education policy advocating for social justice and the addition of languages in childhood, primary and secondary schools (Prax-Dubois & Hélot, 2020; Schwarz & Nick, 2018). Although there has been traction in the Creole or island cases with regard to multilingualism, the tertiary sector is being residually ignored. Very little remains known on the nature and benefits of this multilingual practice in islands where blending of languages has been naturalised under the name such as Creole.

1.1 Background to study

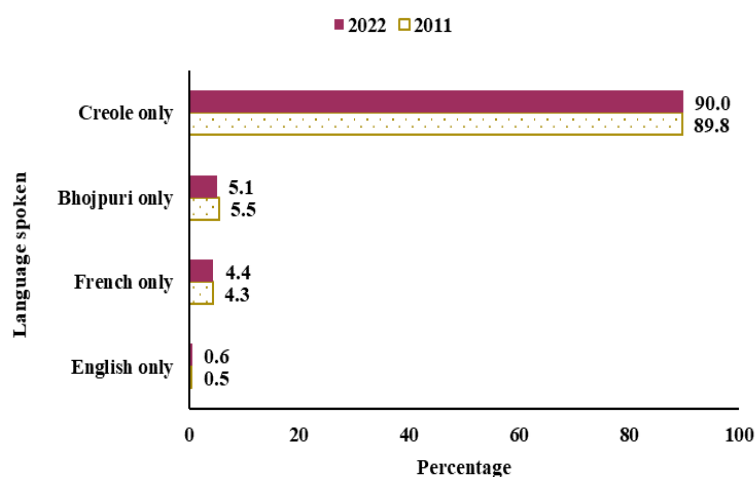
The republic of Mauritius has a multidimensional linguistic position largely due to its colonial remnants. The linguistic situation in Mauritius has often been described as a complex issue by researchers. Its eclectic mix was constructed through a series of events during the initial Dutch, then French and British rule. At the beginning of the Mauritian colonial era, African slaves were brought from Madagascar and abandoned, and then later Indian indentured labourers were recruited to work the sugar plantations after the abolition of slavery while the Chinese occupied Mauritius as merchants (Sambajee, 2016). As a direct consequence of all these events from 1638-1912, a Creole was developed which today is spoken by the vast majority of the population (Guillemin, 2011). The Creole spoken in Mauritius is a blend of colonial languages (typically French) and indigenous languages (Dabre & Sukhoo, 2022).

The introduction of Mauritian Creole as a language of teaching and learning known as Kreol, came in 2012. However, this met with much criticism when it became institutionalised as a subject in school (Sambajee, 2016). The aim of the school system is to develop literacy in French, English and, in some cases, the ancestral languages but not Kreol (Rajah-Carrim, 2004).

For this study, the Creole spoken in Mauritius as a language will be referred to as Kreol. Mauritius is a representation of a diverse, multilingual milieu with a multifarious linguistic situation, as is often described by researchers (Owodally, 2015; Sambajee, 2016; Tirvassen & Ramasawmy, 2017).

There has been much research surrounding Kreol regarding the teaching of content in the education sector and Kreol is widely documented as the *lingua franca* of the bulk of the population of Mauritius (Auleear Owodally, 2012; Bissonauth & Offord, 2001; Rajah-Carrim, 2007; Tirvassen & Ramasawmy, 2017). Figure 1.1 is an illustration of the most recent statistics derived from the population census. Creole remains the most common spoken language. The statistics show that in 2022, 90% reported speaking Kreol only at home (Population Census, 2022).

Figure 1.1: Language most spoken at home



In 1968, four ethnic groups were officially recognised by the Constitution of Mauritius, namely the Hindus, Muslims, Chinese, and the “General Population” (Eriksen, 2018). The

population of Mauritius is indicated as consisting of a high number of Indo-Mauritius (Indian origin), followed by Afro-Mauritians (African origin or also referred to as Creoles), Sino-Mauritians (Chinese origin), and Franco-Mauritians (French origin) (Sambajee, 2016). This variety of ethnicities has resulted in fluency in several languages among many people.

In higher education, many students are considered multilingual, as they have higher fluency in English, French and Kreol. Kreol is widely spoken, and the student population who can speak all three languages represents the multilingual and multi-ethnic position of the student population (Bissoonauth & Offord, 2001; Sambajee, 2016). Although English and French are considered the operational languages of administration and education, a large part of the population does not acknowledge them as their home languages.

Research into the Mauritian context provides some valuable insight into the pre-school, primary and secondary sectors whereby, in terms of pedagogy, there is evidence using multiple languages in classroom practice (Ankiah-Gangadeen & Samuel, 2014; Bissoonauth & Offord, 2001; Owodally, 2012, 2014, 2015; Rajah-Carrim, 2007). Bissoonauth and Offord (2001) provide classroom examples of “code-switching” and “language mixing” by adolescents in secondary education. In terms of translanguaging, these concepts arguably promote innovative language practices within the multilingual and translingual field. These studies have provided a valuable platform or space for multilinguals to use all the languages in their repertoire in a unitary and fluid manner to advance their overall epistemological access. This has significantly progressed the field of multilingualism (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020; Lewis et al., 2012; MacSwan, 2017; Makalela, 2015).

Research in the Mauritian context seems to have been involved in multilingual practices and as such embodies a continuum of speech repertoires that reflect fluid translingual encounters. However, in a fruitful setting such as Mauritius, where multiple languages co-exist, translanguaging is under-researched to date despite its rich linguistic encounters. Although English is considered the language of education, the use of multiple languages in Mauritian higher education is an area that is under-researched with much of the literature pointing to monolingual bias or preference for the more socially accepted languages that enjoy a higher stature (Bissoonauth, 1998; Rajah-Carrim, 2007).

1.2 Statement of the problem

There are many existing communities worldwide that possess complex multilingual encounters in higher education contexts. Mauritius is one such community. However, very few studies have explored multilingual encounters in higher educational contexts in the country. For many years, it has been a space that harbours multilingual and multicultural practices and although there is an increasing number of studies that recognise multilingual practices in classrooms, research on the use of more than one language in classrooms is limited to the earlier years of education (Ankiah-Gangadeen & Samuel, 2014; Auleear Owodally, 2010, 2012). The higher education context is a space that requires further exploration, especially since issues like access to knowledge, deeper understanding of content, meaning making and identity have to be effectively negotiated as students prepare for the professional world.

Currently there is a need to explore how students in higher education in Mauritius use translanguaging, more specifically how they use their linguistic repertoires to make sense of academic content, negotiate meaning and shape their identities as learners. Additionally, in postcolonial contexts such as this environment, non-dominant languages often struggle to be recognised in more formal roles (Wigglesworth et al., 2013).

Translanguaging has been associated with acquiring content on a deeper, more holistic level. This study explores the use of translanguaging in Mauritian higher education contexts to advance theoretical clarity and explore practical applications of translanguaging in complex multilingual encounters. In the end, recommendations for practice and research are highlighted, which may be adapted in comparable complex multilingual higher education institutions.

1.3 Research aim and objectives

The primary aim of this study is to explore the role of translanguaging as a pedagogical aid within the higher education system of Mauritius. Specifically, the research seeks to understand the degree of translanguaging used in different disciplines, its effectiveness, and its influence on identity affirmation among students. The study's main aim was, therefore, to establish the extent of translanguaging and its perceived efficacy in the four different disciplines at two institutions of

higher education in Mauritius. To achieve this aim, the following research objectives were pursued:

- a) To explore the degree to which translanguaging is used as a learning tool in four disciplines at two institutions of higher learning in Mauritius.
- b) To investigate how translanguaging is used as a tool for deeper learning and epistemological access in four disciplines at the two selected institutions.
- c) To explore students' perceptions of the efficacy of translanguaging as a learning tool in four disciplines at the two selected institutions of higher learning.
- d) To establish how translanguaging in four disciplines at selected Mauritian institutions of higher learning enhances students' cultural and linguistic identity, through the development of a taxonomy of translingual practice.

1.4 Main research questions

Based on its main aim, the study's main research question was, "What is the extent of translanguaging in different disciplines at selected institutions of higher learning in Mauritius?" In order to answer this question, the study asked the following sub-research questions:

- a) What is the degree of the use of translanguaging in different disciplines at selected institutions of higher education in Mauritius?
- b) How is translanguaging used as a tool for deeper learning and epistemological access in different disciplines at the selected institutions?
- c) What are the students' perceptions of the efficacy of translanguaging as a learning tool in different disciplines at the selected institutions of higher learning in Mauritius?
- d) To what extent does translanguaging enhance students' linguistic and cultural identity in different disciplines at the selected institutions of higher learning?
- e) How does translanguaging support or enhance students' cultural and linguistic identity?

A visual representation of the research objectives and the sub-research questions follows in Table 1.1.

1.5 Research objectives and sub-research questions

Table 1.1: Research objectives and sub-research questions

Research Objectives	Sub-Research Questions
a) To explore the degree to which translanguaging is used as a learning tool in four disciplines at two institutions of higher learning in Mauritius.	a) What is the degree of the use of translanguaging in different disciplines at selected institutions of higher education in Mauritius?
b) To investigate how translanguaging is used as a tool for deeper learning and epistemological access in four disciplines at the two selected institutions.	b) How is translanguaging used as a tool for deeper learning and epistemological access in different disciplines at the selected institutions?
c) To explore students' perceptions of the efficacy of translanguaging as a learning tool in four disciplines at the two selected institutions of higher learning.	c) What are the students' perceptions of the efficacy of translanguaging as a learning tool in different disciplines at the selected institutions of higher learning in Mauritius?
d) To establish how translanguaging in four disciplines at selected Mauritian institutions of higher learning enhances students' cultural and linguistic identity through the development of a taxonomy of translingual practice.	d) To what extent does translanguaging enhance students' linguistic and cultural identity in different disciplines at the selected institutions of higher learning?
	e) How does translanguaging support or enhance students' cultural and linguistic identity?

1.6 Rationale

In the Mauritian context, existing literature has largely focused on multilingual practices among learners during their early years (Ankiah-Gangadeen & Samuel, 2014; Auleear Owodally, 2010, 2012; Auleear Owodally & Unjore, 2013; Bissoonauth, 1998; Bissoonauth & Offord, 2001). While such research in early childhood education has provided valuable linguistic insights into the dynamics and challenges faced in this sector, there is a lack of detailed, context-specific

research on the higher education context. Unlike learners in pre-school and formative years, students in higher education have been extensively exposed to a range of language varieties that influence and enrich their repertoire, be it through social or formal encounters (Creese & Blackledge, 2011; Eldjoudi, 2024; Mazak & Carroll, 2016).

There remains a gap in the existing body of knowledge on how university students in Mauritius use translanguaging in their academic learning. Several studies have shown extensive use of multilingual and translingual practices among students, often presenting this as a struggle between colonial and Creole languages in being accepted in more formal or official roles (Nero, 2018; Prax-Dubois & Hélot, 2020). It is worth noting that many of these studies tend to focus on the social justice agenda, rather than on real-life pedagogical practices within the classroom.

While some researchers recognise the frequent use of translingual practices in multilingual Mauritius (Auckle & Barnes, 2011; Bissoonauth & Offord, 2001), there is a clear paucity of knowledge specifically about students in higher education. This study addresses that gap by focusing on how university students in Mauritius, who have been extensively exposed to diverse language varieties, draw upon their full linguistic repertoires in academic contexts.

The rationale for this study stems from the researcher's desire to uncover the ways in which translingual practice is used to develop the skills necessary in the higher education context in Mauritius. Addressing this gap is critical for informing both theory and practice in multilingual education systems. The theoretical importance of this study is to raise the necessary questions and bring about awareness of how we view language and communication, while also contributing to the understanding of all those involved in education. Approaching translanguaging in Mauritius from the perspective of higher education students is intended not only to better understand language practices, but also to inform and improve policy so that all language varieties are recognised by education policymakers and stakeholders, with the aim of improving teaching, learning, and ultimately, success rates.

This study will provide some insight into and offer deeper approaches in dealing with these ongoing challenges. Finally, the study aims to contribute to the teaching practices of educators at all levels, as well as to inform the Ministry of Education in Mauritius, and other

educational contexts with complex multilingual backgrounds, including Creole-speaking communities globally.

1.7 Significance of the study

Although the concept of translanguaging initially emerged with reference to bilingual practices in educational contexts, it was soon affected in other contexts that reflect multilingual and multicultural settings of the existing world. Multicultural settings have become the norm and therefore the needs of multicultural identities must be catered for. Translanguaging has been an effective tool in meeting the various communicative needs in multilingual contexts. It has shown exponential progress in multilingual contexts around the world. While the literature focuses mainly on primary and, on occasion, on secondary classrooms in various parts of the world, there is also a growing demand to understand the translanguaging practices within higher education contexts. Although there is a reasonable focus on education in general, several scholars agree that there is a gap in the higher education sector (Alasmari et al., 2022; Mazak & Carroll, 2016)

Mauritius as the site for investigation presents a linguistically and culturally rich environment within a Creole context that can be seen as complex and also one that has gone by unnoticed for a very long time. Mauritius is characterised by its amalgamation of language, culture, ethnicity and identity, whereby language users of several ethnic backgrounds are able to incorporate language effectively with their varying linguistic resources in everyday life. Mauritius, however, presents a unique situation that comprises several spoken and ancestral languages within a Creole context.

Mauritius represents a unification of several ethnic groups, which were once from different continents, and a (Mauritian Kreol) Creole developed over time resulting from the mixture of several ethnic groups. Since there has been a global shift in recent times from monolingual to multilingual literacies, it is essential to provide enlightenment regarding such contexts. With a French-based Creole, post-colonial, post-independent Mauritius can be defined as multilingual and multicultural whereby traditions and religions define identity. This inevitably transpires in real-life, day-to-day language practices in social and more formal roles. It is not uncommon for Mauritians to add to their linguistic repertoire from other ancestral identities present on the island. The concept of translanguaging obtained a successful reputation in many

parts of the world in different case studies, even in bilingual contexts. Mauritius offers much more than a bilingual context; it is an amalgamation of cultures, identities and languages.

In much of the literature, scholars have described linguistic practice in terms of code switching or code mixing but not in terms of translanguaging, which is deemed more appropriate since there is a plurality of languages in practice. Preschool is a milieu offering an indication of translingual practice. Both instructors and children have been found to practise this in a natural and unconscious manner for the benefit of the learning experience.

Scholars well versed in the rich linguistic diversity of Mauritius have also asserted that more in-depth scholarly work is needed to gain a better understanding of how multilingualism is represented (Auckle & Barnes, 2011; Sambajee, 2016; Tirvassen & Ramaswamy, 2017). They posit that such work would “contribute to the very challenging task of changing the representation of multilingualism that has been based on the definition of languages as named, countable and autonomous entities” (Tirvassen & Ramaswamy, 2017, p. 54). My study addresses this gap and aims to contribute by studying and understanding the translingual practices of multilingual higher education students in Mauritius, highlighting how their discursive practices are situated within a unique linguistic and sociocultural landscape.

At the time of this study, there were very few publications of translanguaging pertaining to Mauritian higher education, as any suggestive translingual practice was limited to the earlier years of education, with a gap in the higher education context (Bissoonauth & Offord, 2001; Owodally, 2015). It is upon that premise that this study is formed. The aim of this study is to investigate the prevalence and the effectiveness of translanguaging as a pedagogical aid within the context of higher education in Mauritius. Getting a better understanding of these processes will result in attaining better methodologies, which may be developed for teachers and education in multilingual settings, not just for Mauritius but for other similar contexts globally. Anticipated findings aim to illustrate the real skills of multilingual individuals that are still being discovered, and to develop a taxonomy for this project. Essentially, it has implications for teaching academic subject areas with the practice of translanguaging in diverse contexts around the world.

Within the field of translanguaging, this study has theoretical significance, especially because multilingual, post-colonial environments like Mauritius challenge deep-rooted

monolingual mindsets. The research contests those monolingual biases by presenting and reflecting on real-life complexities of language use in place where multilingualism is the standard. It subsequently contributes to a deeper understanding of how language is used dynamically and meaningfully in higher education settings, where knowledge in this sector is still being studied. Additionally, it offers a more truthful way of understanding how language actually works in these contexts. Practically, this study can assist with current teaching and learning approaches in higher education to more inclusive approaches. The research also supports language policy restructuring and encourages the recognition of multilingual learners' abilities and identities in communities where the remnants of colonialism are still apparent. Although rooted in Mauritius, the findings have relevance for other similar contexts where cultures and languages intersect in everyday life.

1.8 Definition of terms

The definitions provided below ensure that the terms and concepts used are understood consistently within the parameters of this dissertation. In the context of this study, **translanguaging** is referred to as fluid language practices, particularly whereby multilingual individuals use their linguistic resources in a flexible manner and as a pedagogical approach in support of epistemological access (García, 2009; Li Wei, 2011). This includes but is not limited to the integration of vocabulary, grammar and phonological features (Canagarajah, 2011). The term **multilingualism** refers to the concept of using various languages in different contexts. It can also be regarded as an interdisciplinary phenomenon, which can be studied from both an individual and a societal perspective (Cenoz, 2013).

The definition of **translingual** encompasses more than just the multilingual abilities an individual possesses. It integrates semiotic resources in one's repertoire with the ability to form new meaning (Canagarah, 2012).

The definition of **linguistic repertoire** reflects García's (2009) definition, which refers to the full range of linguistic resources used by individuals. The notion of repertoire extends beyond the idea of separate languages but rather incorporates all the linguistic elements (including dialects and other forms of communication) a person has, and this is used in a fluid and flexible manner.

For the purpose of this study, **Creole** refers to the traditional concept of language blending in a naturalised manner. In order to differentiate between the languages as a collective concept and the Creole specific to Mauritius, **Kreol** refers to the native language or mother tongue that is spoken in Mauritius. Additionally, in Mauritius, **Creole** also refers to the ethnic group of African origin and/or mixed race. **Creole** therefore in this study refers to one of the ethnic groups of the island.

1.9 Overview of the chapters

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1 introduces the research topic and provides the context of the study. It further outlines the statement of the problem, followed by the research aim and objectives. The research questions are presented after which the rationale and significance of the study follow. The definition of terms is also provided, and the chapter ends off with an overview of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to the study's context and specifically the language situation, and education. A brief history of translanguaging is provided alongside its role and importance as a theoretical framework in the education sector. The chapter also discusses the role of identity and epistemic access as key themes in the translanguaging agenda. It also identifies the gaps that the study will address.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter, the research design outlines the justification for the mixed methods approach. The chapter is presented with details regarding the research sites, and population, sampling strategy, and participants. Data collection methods are then discussed; the rationale for choosing these methods is also provided. Lastly, the methods of analysis are explained followed by the limitations of the study and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4: Focus Group Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter presents the findings of the study, based on the data collected from the focus groups. The results are organised highlighting significant themes, with quotes, and visual representations, where necessary, emerging from the data. The findings from the research are discussed and interpreted. The research questions in this chapter addressed translanguaging as a strategic learning tool.

Chapter 5: Survey Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

The findings from the survey questionnaire are presented in Chapter 5, based on the findings from the respondents. The results highlight key themes, with frequency data and quotes, where required. The findings of this chapter address the students' perceptions of the use of translanguaging for teaching and learning. It also addresses aspects of identity in relation to the student's translingual practices.

Chapter 6: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

The final chapter provides a summary of the study, highlighting the major findings. This is completed with the conclusions, and recommendations for practice and future research, based on the study's findings.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter aims to provide the reader with an understanding of the linguistic complexities of the Mauritian landscape, with some insight into how languages are used and perceived generally and in the education system. The chapter reveals some key themes relevant to the study as well as the developments and highlights of the translanguaging era. The discussion is framed broadly within the idea of translanguaging or translingual practice associated with new literacies.

The review pertains to the theoretical underpinnings of translanguaging, the impact on classroom practice and epistemic access. Translanguaging has been viewed as an advantage in pedagogical practices and as a strategy, the implementation, practice, and perception of the concept have been met with challenges and confines. This concern is also addressed in this chapter.

It is fair to say that in some parts of the world, especially in the Global North, such as North America and Europe, there has been extensive research on translanguaging, while the other counterpart remains underexplored (Garcia, 2009). Building on the foundation established by these studies, this research aims to contribute to the ongoing dialogue by exploring the rich multilingual landscape of Mauritius.

2.1 Linguistic diversity and education in Mauritius

The island's linguistic landscape comprises numerous languages, such as English, French, Mauritian Creole (Kreol), and various ancestral languages, such as Hindi and Mandarin (Rajah-Carrim, 2005, 2007; Sonck, 2005). Mauritius has been labelled a polyglossic, multilingual postcolonial context (Ankiah-Gangadeen & Nadal, 2023) or is known to have “societal multilingualism with polyglossia” (Auleear Owodally, 2014, p. 320). It has a multidimensional linguistic position largely attributable to its postcolonial circumstances and as a direct consequence, the Republic is a multilingual society, with three languages that are visibly

more dominant than others, and that serve different societal functions based on governmental policies or education requirements (Simbajee, 2016).

The post-colonial context is said to be shaped by the British and French colonial legacy with the languages having different societal roles with English and French generally perceived to be higher in the metaphorical ranking system of languages (Samuel & Mariaye, 2020). In general, languages such as English and French have always enjoyed more prestige and admiration by educators, parents, and the students themselves. The trilingual co-existence of English, French and Kreol is often supplemented by ancestral languages, which are languages that are affiliated and preserved more by older generations as cultural heritage (Bissoonauth, 2011, Rajah-Carrim, 2005). Kreol is undoubtedly the most widespread language as the native tongue (Census, 2022), which was born out of historical circumstances and is now the *lingua franca*. Even with its extensive use, Kreol has historically been excluded from the education system due to its perceived low prestige (Rajah-Carrim, 2007) until recent backing for its inclusion in schools (Owodally, 2011).

In the education system, children are introduced to multiple languages from a young age. Kreol, the mother tongue or home language, is learned at home while English, French and an ancestral language are taught in primary school (Owodally, 2014). The language policy has often been criticised for allowing all the languages in the schooling system, claiming this a political move rather than a pedagogical advantage, and this is often a perspective used for justifying failure rates (Sonck, 2005).

The need for and importance of English is presented in the 2003 *Preschool Curriculum Guidelines*, with emphasis on introducing English to children in preparation for compulsory schooling in English for the next phase of their educational journey (Owodally, 2014). The *Preschool Curriculum Guidelines* (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2009) for language in pre-school policy permits teachers to use the languages of instruction at their own discretion. There is evidence at pre-school level of a combination of languages (including ancestral languages) used by both teachers and children in the classroom (Owodally, 2012) for effective teaching and learning.

From the first year of primary schooling, in all state-funded educational institutions, English is the medium of instruction, and alongside English, French is a compulsory subject in primary schools, which guarantees that all receive formal education in French (Owodally, 2012). While French is a compulsory subject in the schooling system, Kreol is treated as a non-obligatory language, which demonstrates a certain level of unwillingness to fully accept it in the education system (Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2023).

The language policy of Mauritius acknowledges the significance that Kreol represents in social and family contexts and as an important marker of Mauritian identity, but it is still limited in the education system where it is often criticised for limiting scholars access to the curriculum (Rajah-Carrim, 2007; Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2022). It is also relevant to point out that the policy continues to categorise languages into the following groups: colonial languages (French and English), Asian ancestral languages (such as Hindi), and vernacular languages (such as Kreol). This classification clearly indicates the ranking system mentioned earlier, which derives from the hierarchical power dynamics of post-colonial effects (Rughoonundun-Chellapermal, 2022). Researchers such as de Robillard (1991), Miles (2000), Sonck (2005), and Rajah-Carrim (2005) similarly contributed to the understanding of how the languages of Mauritius are categorised. Table 2.1 below illustrates how the languages are categorised.

Table 2.1: Category of languages

Languages	Category
English and French	European or colonial languages
Kreol and Bhojpuri	Popular/home languages
Arabic, Hindi, Mandarin, Marathi, Tamil, Telegu, Urdu	Oriental languages, Ancestral languages, or Asian languages

Categories of languages (adapted from Tirvassen and Ramasawmy, 2017)

Owing to the conditions in which Creoles were born, there remains a stigma attached to them. Although they have been in existence for many centuries, research illustrates that Creoles still have difficulties in being recognised as fully purposeful languages within their own right. Therefore, the implementation of the languages in education policy is often resisted or rejected

(Auleear Owodally, 2012; Cerat, 2015; Lockwood & Saft, 2016; Nero, 2015; Ukwuoma, 2015; Yakpo, 2016). A Creole frequently exists alongside its lexifier language whereby its superstrate receives a much higher status than the Creole itself and, in most situations, it is also the language of education (Wigglesworth et al., 2013). Owodally (2014) explains that French and Kreol are used as support languages at different levels of education, even in teaching English language skills ((Bissoonauth, 1998; Bissoonauth & Offord, 2001).

While Kreol and French are comfortable choices for Mauritians due to Kreol drawing primarily from its French lexifier, oriental languages also form part of the linguistic resources and ethnic identities of a substantial part of the population. The oriental or ancestral languages stem from the varying ethnic groups. From a sociolinguistic perspective, language as a reflection of Mauritian society is probably the most complex and perplexing aspect of the Mauritian social context.

To elucidate this point, I would like to reflect on a study about language use among young adults that revealed code-mixing and code-switching as natural practices, regardless of their ethnolinguistic backgrounds. The youths were considered trilingual, and in the social context, switching and mixing came naturally to multilingual individuals or those with an education. Their language use was described as a “Creole used with an admixture of French and Kreol words” (Bissonauth & Offord, 2001, p. 398). Noteworthy as well from this research is that in some instances when language mixing was observed, it was not always clear which was Kreol or French. Mauritius also possesses a local variety of Mauritian French (Florigny et al., 2023), to add to the already complex sociolinguistic landscape.

2.2 Translanguaging: History and theoretical framework

Since its inception, translanguaging has become renowned in the field of multilingualism, celebrated for its dynamic use of multiple languages for a variety of reasons in applied communicative and educational settings. At different levels of education, translanguaging has become a pioneering tool in pedagogies globally. Most, if not all the literature, credits the genesis of translanguaging to Cen Williams, who first observed the benefits of *trawsieithu* in Welsh bilingual education (García & Lin, 2017; Lewis et al., 2012; Williams, 1994).

The extent to which translanguaging pivoted is largely attributed to Ofelia García, who is widely known for broadening its development in theory and practice (García, 2022). Translanguaging theory aims at eradicating the social and political parameters by which language is inevitably bound by (Otheguy et al., 2015). It can be described as the “deployment of a speaker’s full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages” (Otheguy et al., 2015, p. 281).

At point of origin, translanguaging practice was strongly associated to bilingual education. Bilingual education has since seen the development of bilingualism theories evolving from monolithic structures, thus permitting practices, such as code-switching, which was prominent to bilingualism, to be viewed in more flexible or dynamic terms, under the notion of translanguaging (García & Wei, 2014). As a theoretical model, translanguaging has not only permitted flexibility in multilingual studies but it has altered the way in which language is being viewed and used.

Bilingualism, initially viewed as the interaction between two autonomous languages, has evolved. For example, the term “flexible bilingualism” is an occurrence that is “not single, fixed [...] but a characterisation of heteroglossic, translanguaging practice” (Creese et al., 2011, p. 1201). It normalises bilingualism without perceiving it as a weakness of bilinguals. Scholars well-versed in the field have acknowledged that monolingual structures are idealistic and have become obsolete (García & Sylvan, 2011, García & Wei, 2014). Languages do not exist autonomously, rather they are socioculturally or ideologically defined (Martin-Beltrán et al., 2017). As such, theories on translanguaging have advanced to such an extent that the sociocultural complexities surrounding the situations are acknowledged and valued.

Guided by a “trans-approach” that acknowledges fluid practices that extend beyond traditional language and educational systems, three key aspects are identified by García and Wei (2014). The three key aspects of this trans-approach are listed below.

- a) “Trans” implies trans-systems and trans-spaces, which symbolise practices that link and transcend socially constructed language and educational frameworks, engaging students’ various ways of meaning making.

- b) “Trans” is able to reshape individual identities and cognitive/social structures, stressing the importance of marginalised voices (or the voices of others) and connecting translanguaging to critical pedagogy, social justice, and linguistic human rights.
- c) “Trans” reflects the cross-disciplinary influence of language practices, providing valuable insights into not only education but also human cognition, learning, social interactions, and societal structures.

The directions that translanguaging trends seem to filter into are in pedagogical approaches, theoretical frameworks, and the social justice agenda. The underlying aim of translanguaging in pedagogy views and encourages flexible and inclusive methods that tap into the students’ full linguistic resources (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022; Parra & Proctor, 2023; Wei, 2022).

Effectively, translanguaging trends have effectively been ubiquitous in the implications of social equity, such as the social justice agenda, pedagogical approaches, and used as theoretical frameworks for a multitude of studies. The last decade has witnessed a continued growth, interest, and acknowledgment of translanguaging as a valued pedagogical approach, especially within the context of English as a foreign language. The literature illustrates repeated benefits, such as improved language acquisition, literacy development, participation, and inclusive learning environments (Mahayanti et al., 2024).

Under its umbrella, translanguaging as a theoretical framework recognises and maintains several language practices and programmes. It questions traditional models of language acquisition and suggests integrated and dynamic ways of understanding how people use multiple languages in different contexts. Translanguaging as a theoretical framework has served scholars not only across multiple disciplines, but at numerous levels of language practices. Scholars have used translanguaging as a lens in educational contexts to potentially transform traditional language structures and practices (García & Wei, 2014).

In the last twenty years, translanguaging research has developed at a speedy rate, with a concentration in applied linguistics and foreign language pedagogy (Xin et al., 2024). Geographically, there has been more focus in the following places: the United Kingdom, the United States, South Africa, Spain, and China (Xin et al., 2024), which are areas that are

inherently multilingual. It can be argued that widespread multilingual contexts have required new literacies and this translanguaging trend is a signifier for this demand.

2.2.1 Pedagogical approaches

For the past two decades, research in the field of multilingual education has come to acknowledge the need for innovative schooling programmes that use more than one language for teaching and learning. Accordingly, there has been a shift from monolingual perspectives of language use to a multilingual view that has evolved even further, encompassing all possible linguistic resources accessible by an individual. Associatively, Makalela's depiction of "linguistic boxes" (2015), in other words, placing each language in their separate boxes, is a notion that is progressively disappearing as more cases exemplify the fluidity of language in use. An interconnected global society has inevitably expanded the concept of multilingualism whereby scholars accredited the emergence of language practice in real-life contexts, and the term "linguaging" was coined. "Linguaging" captures plural linguistic practices as a concept that underscores language as an action rather than what the speaker has (García, 2022; Makoni & Pennycook 2007). García and Li (2014) make purposeful use of the term, which pertains to language practice in context and is considered an ongoing process. Further, it involves interacting with the histories of others, and cultural practices, and learning "a new way of being..." (García & Li, 2014, p. 8.).

Multilingual practice in classrooms has become increasingly common in the twenty-first century (Bahous et al., 2014; Baker, 2001; Canagarajah, 2013; Canagarajah, 2015; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Creese & Blackledge, 2015; García & Li, 2014). Owing to the growing multilingual demands of most settings in the global society, researchers have been suggesting more application of translanguaging practices at all levels of education because of the esteemed outcomes of such studies (Cahyani et al., 2016; Canagarajah, 2015; García & Wei, 2014). The concept of translanguaging has evolved to become relevant and embraced by scholars to describe "the linguistic practices of speakers labelled not only as 'bilingual' but also 'multilingual' (Blackledge & Creese, 2010), and to define as well the many ways that those practices are leveraged for a variety of purposes, especially in education (Canagarajah, 2011; Creese & Blackledge, 2015; Hornberger & Link, 2012; Lewis et al., 2012; Sayer, 2012; Wei, 2011; Otheguy et al., 2015, p. 282).

2.2.2 *Translanguaging beyond language learning*

Although translanguaging theory places emphasis on its characteristic of “*linguaging*”, it is important to mention that the act of translanguaging is also capable of going beyond the typical (bilingual) language learning (i.e. learning English through German). Research illustrates translanguaging as a pedagogical tool to access and create opportunities for the learning of subject areas other than language, such as mathematics and social studies (García & Wei, 2014; Probyn, 2015).

For example, in a study reporting on a group of eight science teachers in South African rural and township schools to teach science, Probyn (2015) demonstrates the advantages of translanguaging in spite of the students’ low proficiency in English. Additionally, science as a subject is considered a challenge because of the nature of its technical terms. The methods of collecting data for this study included a series of lessons for each of the eight teachers whereby every teacher was videotaped and interviewed.

This study places emphasis on one teacher, in particular, who uses the students’ home language for longer stretches during the lesson whereby more opportunities for learning science were achieved. This particular teacher “demonstrated a skilled ‘bridging discourse’ across modes, discourses and languages to provide learners with what appeared to be improved opportunities to learn science” (Probyn, 2015, p. 218).

In contrast, the other teachers were documented to have used code-switching or translation, which not only illustrated a lower possibility of acquiring access to the science curriculum but allowed room for misinterpretation. Termed “*pedagogical translanguaging*” Probyn (2015, p. 218), specifically distinguishes this practice from both code-switching and translation, for they “reflect a temporary (and sometimes illicit) deviation from a monolingual ideal” (p. 221). This is a reflection of the much-reiterated view of several scholars advocating that translanguaging is not rigid, but rather a flexible act (Cummins, 2008; Heller, 1999; García & Sylvan, 2011; García & Wei, 2014).

2.2.3 *Identity and epistemic access*

Existing research recognises the critical role played by identity affirmation and epistemic access in multilingual situations. To echo Djité (2006), a language cannot be separated from the context within which it exists, and that is primarily and directly in relation to the people who use those very languages. Individuals are able to knowingly create and constantly modify their sociocultural identities and values through social practices such as translanguaging (Wei, 2011). Multilinguals can switch between languages, which implies that they are able to switch their presentation of self and identity according to their desires or what the situation might demand of them (Versluys, 2008).

Research in pedagogy in tertiary classrooms indicates the use of intentional or active translanguaging by bilingual teachers in multilingual Indonesia (Cahyani et al., 2016). In classroom translanguaging, the importance is more on functions than on the forms of language, and more on the learning process of bilinguals than on the outcomes (Lewis et al., 2012).

Although Probyn (2015) describes code-switching as a reflection of a monolingual ideal, Cahyani et al. (2016) have adopted a translanguaging perspective to identify “pedagogical and sociocultural functions of teachers’ code-switching as part of their bilingual repertoire of professional practice” (2016, p. 3). Another functional category of code-switching is identified by Cahyani et al. (2016), adding on to Ferguson’s (2009) previously identified functional categories of code-switching. They are as follows:

- Knowledge construction, including pedagogical scaffolding of content lessons, conceptual reinforcement, annotation of key second language (L2) technical terms, and review of a topic.
- Classroom management, ranging from a topic shift/footing in lesson content to management of pupil behaviour, such as developing self-awareness, gaining attention, and reprimanding/chiding.
- Interpersonal relations, including indexing and negotiating different sociocultural identities and humanising the classroom climate, such as by giving praise and establishing rapport.
- Personal or affective meanings, covering teachers’ personal experiences, feelings, and sociocultural functions, such as saving face (Cahyani et al., p. 6).

The existing body of research identifies younger people who have presented an impressive, complex, and creative use of their full linguistic repertoires for a range of purposes, which can occur at any level of communication (Canagarajah, 2011; Wei, 2016; Makalela, 2015; Martin-Beltrán, 2014). Much of the literature posits the benefits of translanguaging in learners, regardless of the situational context (García & Sylvan, 2011; Makalela, 2015; Martin-Beltrán, 2014; Jonsson, 2013). Creese and Blackledge (2011, p. 1209) provide examples from a broad case study across complementary schools from a variety of places to “situate language use in changing transnational worlds, where new multilingualisms emerge, as young people use a vast array of linguistic resources which constantly change and develop.” The diverse funds of knowledge in translanguaging practices are recognised as crucial to successful learning. The way in which learners use translanguaging has been described as “sophisticated” as learners make use of their linguistic resources as an integrated repertoire to work in collaboration to engage in literacy work and grapple with linguistic problems (Martin-Beltrán, 2014). Similarly, the “trans” in translanguaging exemplifies flexibility, the ability to go beyond socially constructed language systems (Donahue, 2015; Wei, 2016).

In Li Wei’s depiction of post-multilingualism challenges, it is emphasised that translanguaging is more than just a term that aims to replace traditional terms such as code-switching in reference to multilingual behaviour. Rather, it represents “the interconnectedness between the traditionally and conventionally understood languages and other human communication systems” (Wei, 2016, p. 7). In other words, language cannot be detached from an individual’s knowledge of human relations and their social interaction.

In another study conducted by Makalela (2015), with pre-service language teachers as the participants, results indicated the epistemic advantages of “using plural language practices” (p. 201) in a South African higher education institution among speakers of the Nguni language cluster (i.e. isiZulu, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, and SiSwati) learning Sepedi (also known as Northern Sotho) as a second language. South African classrooms can be described as complex, given its rich, diverse cultures and languages. In this study, translanguaging strategies were purposefully implemented during lessons, with more than three languages used at the same time. The recurring themes pointed to benefits of a reinforced plural sense of self, cultural similarities, deeper understanding, and a multilingual identity of the future teacher.

A plural sense of self speaks to the authentication of one's true self or one's identity. These language practices do not only reinforce the individual's plural identity but also increase one's confidence. There were a number of identifiable advantages emerging from this study. First and foremost, these experiences confirm that "linguaging experiences and ways of communicating form one's linguistic identity and reveal how multilingual speakers experience the world" (Makalela, 2015, p. 210).

Multicultural settings have become the norm and therefore the needs of multicultural identities need to be catered for. Secondly, the study closed proximal space between cultures when participants realised that they were not completely dissimilar. Thirdly, and noteworthy, the use of more than one language in classrooms permitted deeper understanding for the participants. This fortifies that translanguaging approaches to learning have been more beneficial in comparison to strict monolingual structures imposed on learners because "using more than one language reveals a complex reasoning process..." (Makalela, 2015, p. 212). Lastly, participants who had the experience of multilingual use in classrooms revealed that they were likely to adopt the same language practices in their own classrooms, thereby assuming a "multilingual teacher identity" (p. 212).

It must be acknowledged that all the success from using translanguaging strategies in a multilingual context were achievable because a "translanguaging space" (Wei, 2011) was created for such practice. In Wei's (2011) portrayal of "translanguaging space", the space created by multilinguals "through their multilingual practices, or translanguaging, has its own transformative power" (Wei 2011, p. 1223). Furthermore, translanguaging spaces do not refer specifically to the physical locations or historical contexts but are referred as "networks of social relations ..." (p. 1225). Wei (2014) proposes that schools construct translanguaging spaces where children are permitted the linguistic freedom to be creative and critical but also where teachers encourage such activities. Students who are linguistically diverse are able to co-construct their language expertise, recognise each other as resources, and act on their knowledge and performance (Wei, 2016).

Translanguaging seems to have benefits for all those involved in the communication process. It also means that differences in language practices have proven to improve epistemic

access as well as sociocultural behaviour. Also, there is the possibility of learning from the translanguaging strategies of multilingual students “while developing their proficiency through a dialogical pedagogy” (Canagarajah, 2011, p. 401). This would lead to the development of the students’ critical thinking skills and their ability to better assess the effectiveness of their choices and to develop metacognitive awareness. Each person (trans) languages differently and each situation is unique, which adds to the value of developing pedagogies from the “ground up” by building on the different language practices of students (Canagarah, 2011; García & Sylvan, 2011). The fact that translanguaging is so fluid and flexible is the reason that translanguaging practice has achieved much admiration among scholars across numerous disciplines.

2.2.4 *Translanguaging in Creole contexts*

In studies within the field of Pidgins and Creoles, including in Mauritius, the teaching of content using the mother tongue has gained much favourability, simply because it would be the most natural and beneficial where language is a barrier for learners (Cyparsade et al., 2013).

Owing to the conditions in which Creoles were born, there remains a stigma attached to them. Although they have been in existence for many centuries, recent research illustrates that they still have difficulties in being recognised as fully purposeful languages within their own right, therefore, the implementation of the languages in the education policy is often resisted or rejected (Auleear Owodally, 2012; Cerat, 2015; Lockwood & Saft, 2016; Nero, 2015; Ukwuoma, 2015; Yakpo, 2016). A Creole frequently exists alongside its lexifier language whereby its superstrate receives a much higher status than the Creole itself and, in most cases, it is also the language of education (Wigglesworth et al., 2013).

Although there is an acknowledgment that multilingualism exists on this island, “code-switching” is a concept frequently used by scholars in the Mauritian context (Auckle & Barnes, 2011; Auleear Owodally, 2012; Auleear Owodally, 2014). Auleear Owodally (2012) highlights that a hierarchy exists even in the teaching of preschoolers in Mauritius. Teachers tend to prefer French, as they are more proficient in it, and Kreol is often placed last in this hierarchy, despite being the children’s mother tongue. Children using Kreol in the classroom are frequently muted or corrected to French, which reflects the social hierarchy between the two languages.

Furthermore, the pre-primary National Curriculum Framework (NCF) expects teachers to demonstrate equal fluency in all languages taught and for learners to attain the same proficiency in each language (Ankiah-Gangadeen & Samuel, 2014, p. 59). This expectation is unrealistic, as teachers themselves are not comfortable using English, which further limits learners' proficiency to the same level as their teachers, if not lower.

García and Li Wei (2014) define translanguaging as the creative use of multilingual resources to make sense of one's world. Pre-school teaching is a setting where translingual practices are possible. In Mauritius, when teachers doubt the children's understanding in French, they provide explanations in Kreol. Teachers often switch to Kreol when asking about the children's experiences, fostering emotional involvement. Additionally, the use of oriental languages is common when addressing each ethnic group in the classroom, with "borrowed" words introduced as needed. This demonstrates that preschool teachers are negotiating the "covert and ambiguous multilingual language-in-education policy" (Auleear Owodally, 2012, p. 247).

Teachers also adapt and integrate religious terms specific to each ethnic identity group, using French, Kreol, and English to clarify meanings when necessary (Auleear Owodally, 2014). This highlights a more complex practice than simply "code-switching." In this setting, children from diverse ethnic backgrounds are exposed to different languages and cultures from their peers, enriching their speech repertoires. This context promotes multilingual encounters and caters to learners' linguistic resources. Arguably, this multifaceted context has already been undergoing translingual practices. While Auckle and Barnes (2011) discuss code-switching, mixed codes, and fused lects in the Mauritian context, the lens of translanguaging has yet to be widely adopted in the literature.

Auleear Owodally (2014) confirms teachers' use of French and Kreol as support languages at different levels of education, even in teaching English language skills (Bissoonauth, 1998; Bissoonauth & Offord, 2001). While there seem to be negative perceptions in the field of Pidgins and Creoles related to implementing Creoles in education (Ukwuoma, 2015; Cerat, 2015; Lockwood & Saft, 2016), creolist, Siegel (2007), asserts that the use of Creoles in education is positively apparent and includes increased motivation and improvement in overall academic

performance. Evidence to date overwhelmingly shows the advances of Creoles in education, and studies in this area have not found adverse effects of including Creoles in education (Wigglesworth et al., 2013). Overall, there is substantial optimism from results about translanguaging, such as providing students with linguistic flexibility for different situations or communicative acts (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Langman, 2014; Makalela, 2015; Nkadameng & Makalela, 2015).

The opposition of Creoles in official or educational roles is rather prominent in post-colonial countries, and although native to the majority of the population, it has taken a long time in most cases for Creole languages to be recognised, and in others, not at all. Usually, Creoles are professed as social or informal languages and unsuitable for official purposes. However, researchers in the field of Pidgins and Creoles worldwide have validated the importance and benefits of Creoles in education despite their perceived low status (Carat, 2015; Hebblethwaite, 2012; Wigglesworth et al., 2013). It can be argued that Creoles have already undergone and are still undergoing a process of translanguaging.

Lockwood and Saft (2016, p. 4), strong contenders for Creoles in education, maintain that allowing a Creole (in this case of Hawai'i Creole) in the classroom will “increase motivation and facilitate the self-esteem as well as the self-expression that leads to a greater cognitive development”. On a similar note, according to Wigglesworth et al. (2013, p. 392), though there is insufficient research being conducted on Creoles in education, “far from being hindered by the use of their home variety in the classroom, Creole-speaking children are known to have greater success in acquiring the standard when their L1 is used in school”.

While the benefits of having Creoles in education have to some extent be accredited, scholars in the field of Pidgins and Creoles warrant more research. However, whatever little research has been conducted has received positive outcomes with regard to the use of Creoles in education. In other words, making available to that individual a language that is natural to them while learning.

Often, however, it is the language users themselves who possess inherent negative attitudes towards their native Creole. It is therefore not uncommon for the Creole languages to be the last in the categorisation of languages in a Creole context. In a study pertaining to Nigeria,

Ukwuoma (2015) demonstrates how educators themselves have rejected the use of Nigerian Creole in Nigeria as the language of instruction. A reason for this is that there is no accepted orthography yet for Nigerian Creole. Subsequently, educators fear that this might affect the students' learning of English. Another concern is the limited technical vocabulary of Nigerian Creole, as NC and English are seen as very different languages. However, positive feedback was received by graduate students who viewed the combination of NC and English as languages of instruction because it was "fun" and because NC represented "their voice" (Ukwuoma, 2015, p. 3). Being able to communicate freely using one's native language is closely related to one's identity and being able to express that sense of self. This is aptly explained in the following:

These are young people using linguistic features from a wide range of sources, including those associated with religious texts, the 'homeland' national heritage, diverse popular cultural forms, coarse, vernacular insults, academic English, non-standard English, and many more. Their complex linguistic repertoires bear the traces of past times and present times, of lives lived locally and globally (Creese & Blackledge, 2011, p. 1209)

In Hawaii, where Hawai'i Creole (HC) is a fully developed Creole but continues to be referred to as "Pidgin" (Lockwood & Saft, 2016), there are also examples in higher education, where HC is seen as inappropriate as the "language of science". On the same line of thought concerning the situation in Nigeria, Hawai'i Creole lacks the technical terms for educational contexts. One respondent referred to HC as a "comical language. It does not always seem to fit in school" (Lockwood & Saft, 2016, p. 7). The inappropriateness of HC is ill-perceived within the educational setting because the institutional language is English, and the significant tests are done in English. Therefore, some educators could not see the usefulness of HC. Nonetheless, there were fewer negative responses than positive ones to using HC in academic contexts (both spoken and written). As such, Lockwood and Saft (2016) provide some indication of improvement in the perceptions of Hawai'i Creole among educators at the university level in Hawai'i or a shift in language ideologies. For the most part, educators had positive feelings about using Hawai'i Creole in the educational context. Those who were optimistic perceived HC as equivalent to all other official languages of Hawaii and said that students should be allowed to

submit assignments in all languages, including HC. An educator permitted all languages, including HC, within the classroom and for submitting essays.

Other respondents indicated that speaking HC allowed them to be “equal” or “on the same level” as their students and “more comfortable”. One particular response by a lecturer encouraging the use of HC was striking: “Speak their language, and they will respect you. We encourage future instructors to speak the languages of their students...” (Lockwood & Saft, 2016, p. 8). This study illustrates the changing perceptions of HC in education.

The use of multiple languages in pedagogy at all levels of education has become widely accepted and accredited by a vast majority of disciplines as the advantages outweighed the misconceived disadvantages, and therefore monolingual structures have become outdated in studies of language practices (García, 2009). As evident in the literature, translingual language practices have become more prominent, especially in pedagogy. The effectiveness of translingual practice has shown an enhancement in learning and identity confirmation among young people.

Much of the evidence of multilingual use is apparent in Mauritius’s early years of schooling, leaving the higher education context yet to be explored. The benefits of translanguaging have proven to be a fundamental practice in education in multilingual contexts worldwide, but not in the Creole contexts where multilingual encounters seem to be prominent. Studies in translanguaging have predominantly focused on informants or subjects considered bilingual. In fact, this is how the idea of translanguaging emerged. Creole contexts, such as Mauritius, are saturated with multiple languages as resources, with individuals possessing a few linguistic resources.

Research on translanguaging relating to identity, epistemic access for comprehension and deeper learning, Creole contexts and perceptions of the students is pivotal and show that translanguaging is far more superior to monolingual encounters, based on the studies that have been reviewed. The majority of the studies that indicate translanguaging to be a formidable pedagogical aid have neglected an important area, which is the higher education context where there are complex multilingual encounters in Creole situations, such as Mauritius. Such an environment can be considered the future of new literacies. Therefore, the present study seeks to broaden the field, expand and produce new knowledge on the efficacy of translanguaging in this

context in order to grow the field. This study addresses a gap in the research by closely examining translanguaging within a unique, multilingual educational context aimed to mobilise students' funds of knowledge.

In the 21st century, multiple language practices in teaching and learning have become more common, with a growing body of literature demonstrating the use of multilingual literacies at different levels of the education sectors across the globe (Alzahrani, 2019; Charamba 2020; Galante, 2020; Hungwe, 2019; Kirsch, 2020; Li & Luo, 2017). With groundbreaking developments in the field of multilingualism, studies have shown that translanguaging provides a useful resource for multilingual learners. In multilingual contexts, translanguaging theory has become a concept used often to describe the multilingual speaker's ability to express themselves using their rich linguistic repertoires. This approach has led to pioneering pedagogical practices that are celebrated worldwide among varying multilingual environments (Adamson & Coulson, 2015; Canagarajah, 2011; Canagarajah, 2015; García, 2009; García & Sylvan, 2011; Wei, 2011, Makalela, 2015; Probyn, 2015).

Studies that have implemented or used translanguaging strategies and practices, in the broad school sectors, reveal that issues relating to identity, facilitating a deeper understanding of content, and access to knowledge are being resolved in multilingual communities around the world (Cenoz & Santos, 2020; Karlsson et al., 2019). This is inclusive of schools in Sub-Saharan Africa (Goia et al., 2019; Maseko & Mkhize, 2019). Likewise, in higher education contexts, issues around access to knowledge, learning through other languages, and identity affirmation, have been educational matters affiliated to the translanguaging narrative all over the world (Alzahrani, 2019; Asfour et al. 2020; Galante, 2020; Wang, 2020). Research has shown that translanguaging is a frequent occurrence in multilingual contexts with a growing body of literature that recognises the advantages of such practice in multilingual educational contexts (Cahyani et al., 2016; García & Wei, 2014; Makalela, 2015). Since in higher education the focus is on acquiring content at a deeper level, there is a lot of sensitivity around students acquiring content holistically so they can be innovative in the world of work and so that their identity positions are affirmed as a way to project confidence when students leave university. At the higher education level, several studies have also looked at similar aspects. Mazak and Carroll

(2017) compiled a series of empirical studies that illustrate how translanguaging pedagogies are negotiated in higher education, specifically in the Global South.

Creole speaking contexts possess an inherent multilingual status, which is usually ideologically revered but not practically viable. Studies in these contexts often focus on the inequalities and injustices borne from their colonial historical pasts (Siegel, 2007). With specific reference to multilingual Creole contexts within the islands of Indian-Oceanic regions, a considerable amount of attention has been given to language inclusion and social justice. These environments have often explored the challenges in relation to multilingual encounters in education policy, and classrooms, often resulting in the separation of languages. While some studies reflect the importance of the inclusion of Creole in education (Siegel, 2007), it is also noted that multilingual encounters are completely natural even if there is an apparent monolingual bias or a form of language supremacy present (García, 2014).

To date, research in the Creole contexts where there is creolisation has focused on social justice with arguments for the introduction or use of Creole as a formal language in teaching and learning in school. Indian-Oceanic regions, such as Seychelles and La Reunion, have explored the challenges in relation to multilingual encounters in education policy advocating for social justice and the addition of languages in childhood, primary and secondary schools (Prax-Dubois & Hélot, 2020; Schwarz & Nick, 2018).

Although there has been traction in the Creole or island cases with regard to multilingualism, the tertiary sector is being ignored. Researchers often describe the linguistic situation in Mauritius as a complex issue. According to Sambajee (2016), post-colonial Mauritius has a multidimensional linguistic position largely attributable to its postcolonial remnants. Research in the Mauritian context has always been involved in multilingual practices and as such embodies a continuum of speech repertoire that reflect fluid translingual encounters. There has been much research surrounding Mauritian Kreol regarding the teaching of content in the education sector and Kreol is widely documented for being the *lingua franca* to the bulk of the population of Mauritius (Bissonauth & Offord, 2001; Rajah-Carrim, 2007; Owodally, 2012; Tirvassen & Ramasawmy, 2017).

The literature pertaining to the Mauritian context provides some valuable insights into the pre-school, primary and secondary sectors whereby, in pedagogy, teachers are evidenced to have used multiple languages in classroom practice (Ankiah-Gangadeen & Samuel, 2014; Bissonauth & Offord, 2001; Owodally, 2012, 2014, 2015; Rajah-Carrim, 2007). For example, Bissoonauth and Offord (2001) provide classroom examples of “code-switching” and “language mixing” by adolescents in secondary education. These studies have provided valuable contributions, as well as advanced the field of multilingualism.

Mauritius has been widely documented for its sociolinguistic complexities. The way in which the multilingual context has been conceptualised has been criticised by some scholars who assert that frameworks have been too focused on system and not on the context (Tirvassen & Ramasawmy, 2017). Researchers have called for an epistemological shift to reflexive research as a way of understanding the concept of multilingualism in placing value on viewing language in real-life context rather than treating languages as independent entities (Tirvassen & Ramasawmy, 2017).

Recent research illustrates that the multilingual context of Mauritius is viewed from a more practical perspective, highlighting the language flexibility that prioritises the language preference of students (Ankiah-Gangadeen & Nadal, 2023). In researching teachers’ language practices in the multilingual and multicultural context of Mauritius, this study makes a case for reflexivity as the approach to the research process. The study asserts the need for an adaptation of tools and methods that suit the subjects’ linguistic profiles over imposing pre-determined linguistic procedures as a way to ensure authentic data. The study’s findings accentuate the need for researchers to adapt their tools and methods to participants’ linguistic profiles, rather than imposing rigid, pre-established linguistic protocols (Ankiah-Gangadeen & Nadal, 2023).

This chapter has highlighted the theoretical and empirical studies of translanguaging, as well as contextual information about the research site. The literature reveals that multilingualism has always been a relevant topic but there is call for the rethinking of multilingualism for more effective resolutions that consider the subjects over the system. Previous research, by de Robillard (2005), Tirvassen (2011, 2014, 2015), and Ramasawmy (2016), has shown the value of

focusing on language practices in their real-life context rather than treating languages as autonomous entities.

In a rich setting such as Mauritius, where multiple languages co-exist, translanguaging is under-researched to date despite its abundant linguistic encounters. The role of translanguaging in Mauritius, particularly in the higher education sector, remains underexplored. The higher education is a critical phase in shaping the academic and professional prospects. While a lot of emphasis is placed on the pre-university education sectors, understanding how translanguaging can support learning is essential. The study aims to contribute valuable insights into how translanguaging practices can enhance educational outcomes, cultural identity, and inclusivity in the Mauritian higher education landscape.

2.3 Conceptual framework

This section outlines key theoretical foundations, and the interconnected aspects that shape the use of translanguaging as a pedagogical and epistemological approach in multilingual, Creole-speaking, postcolonial contexts. Translanguaging is understood as more than a linguistic approach, it is a practice that enables multilingual individuals to use their full linguistic repertoire to make meaning, access knowledge and access knowledge (García & Li Wei, 2014; Wei, 2011).

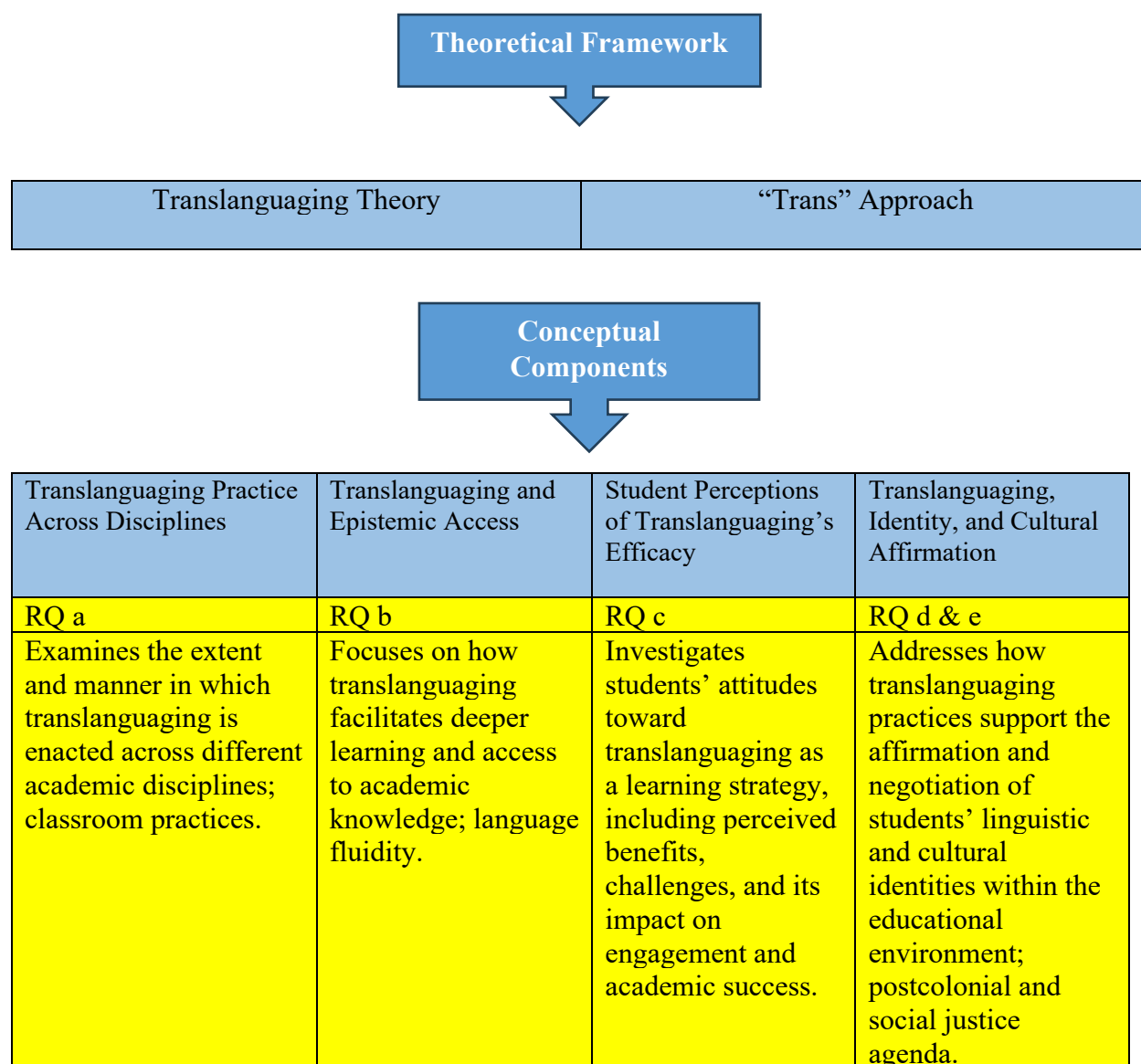
Like in the case of Mauritius, monolingual ideologies are known to dominate formal education systems and this framework challenges and critiques these systems. Furthermore, the “Trans-Approach” recognises three key aspects. Firstly, it is focused on surpassing socially constructed language and educational frameworks and acknowledging ways of meaning making. Secondly, it emphasises marginalised voices, and provides a link between translanguaging, social justice and linguistic human rights. Lastly, “trans” signifies the interdisciplinary nature of language practices, offering insights into education, cognition, learning, social interaction, and society (García & Li Wei, 2014).

The framework is centred around four conceptual components drawn from translanguaging and theory and “trans-approach” which underpin this study. The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

- a) What is the degree of the use of translanguaging in different disciplines at selected institutions of higher education in Mauritius?
- b) How is translanguaging used as a tool for deeper learning and epistemological access in different disciplines at the selected institutions?
- c) What are the students' perceptions of the efficacy of translanguaging as a learning tool in different disciplines at the selected institutions of higher learning in Mauritius?
- d) To what extent does translanguaging enhance students' linguistic and cultural identity in different disciplines at the selected institutions of higher learning?
- e) How does translanguaging support or enhance students' cultural and linguistic identity?

Figure 2.1 illustrates how the theoretical (Translanguaging Theory and the “Trans-approach”) and conceptual frameworks are connected, the conceptual components, and the research questions that guide this inquiry.

Figure 2.1: Visual representation of theoretical/conceptual framework



This conceptual framework provides the lens through which the study explored translanguaging in Mauritian higher education. It positions translanguaging as a transformative approach capable of fostering inclusive, culturally responsive, and engaging multilingual learning environments within postcolonial settings.

Chapter Three

Methodology

The aim of this study was to explore translanguaging in the higher education system in the Creole Mauritian context. This chapter outlines the methodology used in this study to investigate translanguaging as a pedagogical aid in Mauritius's higher education system. This chapter therefore details the research approach, design, research site, and population and sample, data collection methods, and data analysis methods that were employed to address the research questions. The investigation was guided by the following questions:

- a) What is the degree of the use of translanguaging in four disciplines at selected institutions of higher education in Mauritius?
- b) How is translanguaging used as a tool for deeper learning and epistemological access in the four disciplines at the selected institutions?
- c) What are the students' perceptions of the efficacy of translanguaging as a learning tool in the four disciplines at the selected institutions of higher learning in Mauritius?
- d) To what extent does translanguaging enhance students' linguistic and cultural identity in different disciplines at the selected institutions of higher learning?

3.1 Research design – mixed methods approach

Selecting a mixed methods approach as the study's design was led by the research questions. As a multilingual place with a diverse and complex linguistic populace, the individuals are bound to engage and experience translanguaging in different ways. A mixed methods approach allows nuanced perspectives through qualitative data collection, and to also gather broader, generalisable data through quantitative methods. Within the framework of a mixed methods approach, this study was most suited for an exploratory sequential mixed methods approach.

The mixed methods research is an approach that makes use of both quantitative and qualitative data, incorporating the two types of data. This form of inquiry assumes that the combination of the two approaches offers a comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2023). Although it is generally believed that quantitative and

qualitative research are direct opposites of each other, the two approaches should not be viewed as “rigid, distinct categories, polar opposites, dichotomies” (Creswell, 2014, p. 3).

Since the purpose of this study was to understand and interpret certain aspects of translanguaging, a qualitative approach was complementary because quantitative methods in this context alone would not elicit the rich data necessary to address the research aims. To retrieve rich data, in-depth discussions were required that centred around reflections of (trans)languaging by the students and their views on its effectiveness from a pedagogical perspective, which could only be stimulated by interacting with the participants on an interpersonal level.

Using this approach allowed for rich contextualisation, which provided insights into the complex how and why questions related to the use of translanguaging of the particular group of participants in my research (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2023). While qualitative research emphasises viewing meaning within a specific context, quantitative research typically focuses on remaining independent of the phenomena being studied (Lapan et al., 2012). Although qualitative research is known to provide highly rich contextualised data, a possible limitation is research subjectivity or bias. Subjectivity is lower in quantitative research, but it might overlook contextual nuances (Wangdi & Rai, 2024). A mixed methods approach was chosen for this study as it minimised the limitations of both approaches (Creswell & Cresswell, 2023).

The main research aim was to attain a deeper understanding of the concept of translanguaging within a higher education Creole context from the perspectives of the participants. Studies that are qualitatively driven focus on “giving voice to those who live experiences that no one else could know about directly” (Lapan et al., 2012, p. 9). The voices of the multilingual higher education students in a Creole context have residually been ignored. This study brings their voices to light to expand the field of multilingualism through the translanguaging agenda. In considering the multilingual Creole of Mauritius, the complexity of the environment, specifically the higher education milieu, this study brings forward the dynamic and lived experiences of the participants, and whatever is being studied would happen in a real-world setting rather than a controlled environment (Creswell & Cresswell, 2024). Translanguaging can be considered common practice in Mauritius, and therefore it is essential to explore how translingual practices can facilitate epistemic access.

For the first phase of the study, I implemented qualitative data collection through focus groups in order to yield prominent themes. This study was guided by discussions conducted during focus-group interviews from the perspectives of the undergraduate students at two institutions of higher education in Mauritius, and field notes made by the researcher. The reason for using focus groups as opposed to one-on-one interviews for this research was that focus groups promote interaction among participants. This method also observes how the group participants think and feel about the topic and researchers have the flexibility to collect rich qualitative data through the interaction of the participants (Gundumogula & Gundumogula, 2020). In addition, during the data collection process, participants were able to confirm and comment on one another's experiences of the same situation. This validated the findings and provided a comprehensive view of their reflections and experiences.

Qualitative research is situated in a fundamentally constructivist philosophical position in that it is associated with how the intricacies of the sociocultural world are experienced, interpreted and understood within a particular setting. The social constructivist's purpose is to seek understanding of the participants' experiences and because meaning is based on perception, the researcher creates meaning through interaction with individuals (Creswell & Cresswell, 2023). The context in which the participants learn is also taken into consideration as a way of obtaining a full understanding of the historical and cultural settings of the participants (Creswell & Cresswell, 2023). This study is situated well within the historical and cultural settings of the participants.

The second phase of the data collection was created from some of the themes generated from the qualitative thematic analysis. These themes were measured against other qualitative findings in the literature review. A survey was developed, which was sent to a different sample from the same population, ensuring that the participants were not the same (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2023). The two datasets were analysed separately with the findings from the first phase and then this was built into the quantitative instrument.

3.2 Research sites and population

According to the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Mauritius, there are numerous higher education institutions of which nine are public and 34 are recognised as private (HEC,

n.d.). In this study, two institutions of higher education were involved, one public and one private. To ensure confidentiality, the institutions are here referred to as Institution A and Institution B. Both institutions are located in the Moka District, which is found in the central plateau of the island, surrounded by serene nature and mountainous views.

With a multiethnic and multicultural population of about 1.2 million, local students are considered multilingual having been instructed in English and French, and in some cases Kreol, with ancestral languages at pre-primary level (Auleear Owodally, 2012), primary (Carrim, 2007) and secondary levels of education (Bissoonauth, 1998). Additionally, Kreol is the home language, and for some, an ancestral language also forms part of their linguistic repertoire. The student population comprised both local and international students at both establishments. The multilingual environment offered an ideal context for investigating how translanguaging would be employed as a pedagogical tool in a system that officially used English as the language of education.

To gain a broad perspective of translanguaging, the study focused on first-year undergraduate students from four fields of study, exploring how translanguaging was used in different disciplines. In general, undergraduates are still in the training and skills-development stages of their education and therefore they were appropriate subjects for the investigation. Undergraduate students were chosen for this study based on the fact that they were still in the process of acquiring and consolidating foundational knowledge in their respective fields, making them particularly pertinent for exploring how multiple language practices might assist in comprehension of material, negotiation of meaning, and deeper understanding of problematic content. Institutions A and B were selected based on the criteria related to their undergraduate programmes offered, and data was collected from both institutions.

Institution A is a private institution that offers several undergraduate programmes with an enrolment number of about 2 000 students. In 2024, A was established as a high-ranking university globally, recognised for its strong affiliation with industry, impactful research and varied programmes. Students have reported the atmosphere or environment as “family-oriented”, “warm”, and “welcoming”. The programmes were selected due to their content-specific nature.

Institution A offers an array of programmes nested in Commerce, Design, Communications, and Science. It can be considered a rather young establishment having been founded in 2004.

Institution B, on the other hand, is a public institution, which was established in 1973. Their focus is on educational research, curriculum development, and teacher training. This establishment operates under the Ministry of Education in Mauritius. It has an enrolment of approximately 4 000 students, and it is the fourth largest campus in the Mauritian higher education sector. Combined, the two research sites provided a range of undergraduate programmes aiming at a more comprehensive outlook on translanguaging in higher education. The selection of these programmes effectively addressed the first research inquiry on how translanguaging was used across disciplines in Mauritius higher education.

Based on these particulars, and that the research objective was to determine whether multiple language use was present and practised in the Mauritius higher education context as a way of enhancing knowledge and understanding, the institutions were well-suited for the study. Translingual practices exist in multilingual classrooms as a way of enhancing knowledge and achieving a deeper understanding of content, irrespective of the disciplines to which these classrooms belong (Garcia & Li, 2014; Makalela, 2015). While the study aims to illuminate this existing theory, it also focused on providing a wide-ranging view of translanguaging in disciplines within a Creole context. The selection of the field sites with affiliated undergraduate programmes satisfies the criteria for the research inquiry. The study employed two methods of data collection, namely focus groups interviews, and an online survey questionnaire.

3.3 Sampling and participants

In exploring the notion of translanguaging as an aid in the higher education context of the island of Mauritius, the sampling method had to illustrate an adequate representation of the higher education milieu. It is for this reason that different fields of study were selected from a private and a public education sector. Additionally, with the selection of participants for this study, this meant that the participants had to meet certain criteria that would align to the research objective of the study. The participants had to be multilingual, first-year undergraduates enrolled for different programmes in the Mauritius higher education system. A purposeful sampling strategy was employed for the study, which was typically a non-probability method where

participants were chosen based on certain characteristics or lived experiences (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2023; Patton, 1990, 2001). Subsequently, the choice of participants could not be random. Purposeful sampling targets a group of participants who can provide rich data to better understand the language practices in pedagogy (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2023). Gaining insights and an understanding into the shared and lived experiences of the participants underpins the very essence of this study.

To address the research question on how translanguaging is employed in different disciplines, the participants were registered in one of the following programmes:

- Bachelor of Commerce
- Bachelor of Design
- Bachelor of Science
- Bachelor of Education

The participants were aged between 19 and 34 (mean age 22.07; SD 3.306). As multilinguals, they were conversant with the trilingual use of English, French and Kreol at this level of their educational journey, with some also having an ancestral language as a language resource in their repertoire. Table 3.1 is a sample representation of the composition of what their linguistic repertoire resembles. The sample is an adequate representation of the Mauritian ethnolinguistic group which makes the linguistic environment an ideal multilingual context in which to explore translanguaging.

Table 3.1: Linguistic repertoire sample

Age	Ethnic Background							Total
24	Indo-Mauritian (Indian)	English	French	Kreol		Arabic	Urdu	5
23	Afro-Mauritian (Creole)	English	French	Kreol	Hindi			4
19	Indo-Mauritian (Indian)	English	French	Kreol	Hindi	Bhojpuri		5
20	Mixed	English	French	Kreol	Hindi			4
20	Indo-Mauritian (Indian)	English	French	Kreol	Hindi		Urdu	5
20	Indo-Mauritian (Indian)	English	French	Kreol	Hindi			5
19	Indo-Mauritian (Indian)	English	French	Kreol	Hindi	Bhojpuri		5
20	Indo-Mauritian (Indian)	English	French	Kreol		Marathi		4
21	Indo-Mauritian (Indian)	English	French	Kreol	Hindi			4
21	Mixed	English	French	Kreol	Hindi			4
20	Indo-Mauritian (Indian)	English	French	Kreol	Hindi			4
20	Indo-Mauritian (Indian)	English	French	Kreol	Hindi	Bhojpuri		5
24	Indo-Mauritian (Indian)	English	French	Kreol	Hindi	Bhojpuri		5
24	Indo-Mauritian (Indian)	English	French	Kreol	Hindi	Bhojpuri		5

3.4 Selection process

A crucial step in the recruitment of the participants was to obtain approval to conduct the research at each respective institution. After extensive communication and discussion with the Head of Research (HoR) at Institution A, regarding the study and protocols, permission to conduct research with students was granted. The first step of the recruitment process was guided by HoR, who requested a letter from the researcher, which was then circulated to the specified departments. The HoR managed the process further by communicating directly with the relevant instructors of each discipline, who then provided the names and contact details of the students willing to take part in the study. It was explained that the study investigated translanguaging practices, and that the students would not be examined for their use of language. Authorisation to interact with the students via interviews was granted; permission to observe lectures was not granted. As a private institution, at Institution A, the average class size can be considered modest, with a typical number of twenty-five (25) students in a lecture. A total of fifteen (15) participants were recruited; five (5) students from each programme volunteered to be part of the study from this institution. Thereafter, the scheduling of interview meetings was arranged on the institution's premises, based on the students' availability.

The degree programmes from Institution A were diverse; however, it lacked a course programme in the language discipline.

Institution B had a strong focus in this respect. Here, permission was granted by the Deputy Director to conduct research at their organisation. I then worked closely with two instructors who were in the discipline of languages to recruit participants for the language component of the study. The number of enrolled students was double that of Institution A, and the classes were larger, averaging at approximately 35 per class. For the focus group interviews, there were twenty-five (25) enthusiastic students who volunteered to be interviewed from Institution B. In total, there were forty (40) participants from four different programmes who volunteered to take part in the study for the focus groups. Furthermore, another forty (40) students from both A and B agreed to be part of the online survey questionnaire. The overall total number of students who took part in this study amounted to eighty (80).

3.5 Data collection

This section explains the data collection methods that were implemented. In this study, in order to maximise data collection, a combination of data methods was used. In addition to interviews and questionnaires, field notes were also taken while observing certain aspects during the collection period, such as attitudes about speaking certain languages. The two data collection methods were focus groups and then the survey questionnaire; I explain the methods in more detail in the next section.

3.5.1 Focus group interviews

When conceptualising the research approach for my study, the focus groups were unquestionably the data collection method for its interactional properties; and in qualitative research they are generally considered a key instrument for yielding rich data and understanding complex issues (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2023). The interview is a fundamental tool in qualitative research (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018), especially when the participants cannot be observed directly (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2023). Effectively, group interviews are more likely to yield data and particular insights that might not happen when interviewing one person at a given time (Synnot et al., 2014). For this study, focus groups were selected as the approach to data collection, not only for their reputation as a widely used method in qualitative data collection but

also because of their interactive features that encourage participants to engage in discussions and recall experiences and events (Synnot et al., 2014). A focus group is a combination between a meeting for having been preplanned, and contains some form of structure, and a dialogue where members pick up on one another's inputs and provide contributions (Agar & MacDonald, 1995). This method of data collection was specifically selected as it facilitated dynamic exchanges between participants, enhancing the depth of insights, and validated one another's understanding of certain concepts.

When generating qualitative data, focus groups maximise on the interaction between group members to enrich the collection of deep, strong beliefs, values or perspectives (Hornsby, 2022). A strength worth mentioning in this method of collecting data is its usefulness in exploring complex matters affiliated to values and beliefs that influence behaviour, and linguistic practices that are linked to language attitudes (Hornsby, 2022), which are essentially the overarching aim of this study. This allowed ample encounters between the students, which in turn aided in building a strong rapport during the data collection period at the initial stage. This was proven when members presented their experiences and perceptions, others became more conscious of their own perceptions and built on one another's experiences.

The interview questions were designed to explore the participants' (trans)linguaging practices and perceptions from a pedagogical perspective. The questions were centred around multilingual practices that took place during lectures as well as the participants' view of these practices. The questions were semi-structured and guided first by the research aim and also by the responses of the participants.

Each focus group consisted of five participants for each planned group session; from Institution A, there were fifteen (15) participants; from B, there were twenty-five (25). In total, there were 40 participants. The number of volunteers was based on the students who accepted the request to be part of the study. All sessions conducted were face-to-face. Table 3.2 illustrates the number of participants per programme.

Table 3.2: Focus group participants

Institutions	Programmes	Groups	Number of participants
A	Bachelor of Design	1 group of 5	5
A	Bachelor of Commerce	1 group of 5	5
A	Bachelor of Science	1 group of 5	5
B	Bachelor of Education	5 groups of 5	25
Total			40

The sessions took place according to prior arrangements with the students and the university management, and they occurred once a week over a period of two months, for incremental follow ups and response density over time, before reaching saturation phase. The sessions were audio-recorded, with the knowledge and consent of the participants. Each meeting lasted for at least one hour; on some occasions, the meetings extended into the next hour.

3.5.2 Pilot study

The first group that I met with face-to-face was the Bachelor of Design students from Institution A. I treated this group as the pilot. The first session with the students from the Bachelor of Design allowed me to assess the environment, the group dynamics, and to test the questions that were prepared for the study. Table 3.3 is a representation of the group's ethnolinguistic composition. Table 3.3 shows the linguistic and ethnic diversity of the group members. Their ancestral language is usually the language of their parents or grandparents who wish to preserve ancestral ties as immigrants from previous generations.

Table 3.3: Design participants

	Programme	Age	Ethnic background	Multilingual
1	Arts in Digital Design	19	Mixed	English, Kreol, French
2	Arts in Digital Design	22	Mixed	English, Kreol, French
3	Arts in Digital Design	20	Indo-Mauritian	English, Kreol, French, Bhojpuri
4	Arts in Digital Design	22	Sino-Mauritian	English, Kreol, French, Mandarin
5	Arts in Digital Design	20	Indo-Mauritian	English, Kreol, French, Hindi

During the first session, at the start of the pilot, I noted that the participants spoke only in English, as there was an assumption that this is what was expected of them. This created a formal

and rigid atmosphere as they would try to find appropriate words or expressions. I observed their pauses to find the most suitable terms visibly creating breaks in their thought process, which was not the aim of this interview. Accordingly, I explained my fluency in all three languages, and if they preferred, they were welcome to use any of these languages that they felt most comfortable using. Once this was explained, they were noticeably more relaxed and even began expressing themselves using all three languages as part of their expression. I made a note of this, and this was a crucial part in the development of the instruments for the remainder of the data collection process as it led to questions of identity in relation to language.

The pilot provided insight into how they perceived themselves as multilinguals and their multilingual practices during the lectures. The semi-structured questions were guided by the responses of the participants. Some examples of the questions posed included the following:

- Which language/s is/are often heard during your lectures?
- Which languages do you or lecturer use during your lectures?
- Can you recall why the lecturers would speak Kreol or any other languages? Do you have an example in mind?
- Why would the lecturer use various languages?
- Are you expected to speak English?
- If there is a difficult concept or word, how would it normally be described or dealt with?
- What is your heritage?

While the questions revolving around their language practices and those of their lectures seemed clear to the participants, their idea of heritage was deeply rooted in religion, history and culture. This question generated responses that were not fully aligned to the research objectives. Notably, the students mentioned that this was not a question that they were usually probed on. When I adjusted it to “What is your ethnic background”, this seemed more appropriately suited to the study’s objectives.

The main aim of the pilot study was to validate the instrument. Consequently, the pilot helped me to realise that the option of multiple language use during the focus groups created a stimulating and inclusive atmosphere, and secondly, I was able to revise my questions for the

remainder of the study and this also assisted in the building and development of the survey questionnaire.

A limitation of focus groups is that they may not always provide the full depth regarding a particular issue (Hornsby, 2022). Focus groups are guided by a mixture of structured and semi-structured questions while also feeding off the responses of the participants. As a result, the direction of the topic was, at times, deterred in the dialogue among participants. In an effort to maintain the continuous flow of the conversation and allow participants to express their thoughts and build confidence organically, interruptions were delayed, regulated or strategically implemented. This could be considered a limitation as the responses may lead to topics that were unrelated to the study's objectives.

In addition, as I was not able to observe the participants in real-time during their lectures, another limitation of focus groups is that they provided indirect information that is filtered through the views of the participants (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2023). To mitigate both limitations, I continuously ensured that the questions were reiterative, and as an additional strategy, key themes were generated from the analysis of the focus group interviews. To counteract the two limitations, a survey questionnaire was designed, where specific and targeted questions were employed. This was administered online individually to the participants and was designed to yield more individual depth and richness as focus groups may not permit an even contribution per group member.

The focus group interviews were aimed at finding out the extent to which students use translanguaging in their lectures and what their experiences were. The recorded interviews were transcribed, translated by a professional translation company and then analysed. I explored the notion of translanguaging by prompting the participants to reflect on their experience and use of languages during their lectures, as well as by their instructors.

Following the recruitment process for participants to take part in the focus group interviews, the survey questionnaire was prepared and designed based on the results from the focus groups. It was then circulated through the institutions' formal communication protocols.

3.5.3 *The survey questionnaire*

For the online survey questionnaire, I used a well-known software service company that builds online surveys for the overall creation and administration. One way of testing an instrument's reliability and validity is through a pilot study (Khanal & Chhetri, 2024), and it comes highly recommended that qualitative surveys undergo piloting (Braun et al., 2021). The main reason for piloting the survey was to ensure that the questions were presented with clarity for the most accurate responses, and to guarantee the clarity of the interrogations to prevent any potential flawed answers.

Out of a possible fifteen (15) students that were contacted, only six accepted the request to be part of the pilot study. The volunteering students were a group of six (6) first-year students provided by the instructors from their corresponding institutions. The fact that the students who volunteered belonged to different programmes was both fortunate and favourable as the study aimed to show the practice of translanguaging in different disciplines. Table 3.4 illustrates the particulars of the participants.

Table 3.4: Survey participants

	Programme	Age	Ethnicity	Multilingual
1	Bachelor of Commerce	20	Indo-Mauritian (Indian)	English, Kreol, French, Hindi
2	Bachelor of Commerce	21	Indo-Mauritian (Indian)	English, Kreol, French, Hindi
3	Bachelor of Commerce	21	Mixed	English, Kreol, French
4	Arts in Digital Design	23	Mixed	English, Kreol, French
5	Bachelor of Education	21	Afro-Mauritian (Creole)	English, Kreol, French
6	Bachelor of Education	20	Afro-Mauritian (Creole)	English, Kreol, French

A thematic analysis from the results of the focus group interviews generated prominent themes that were then developed and applied to the questionnaire in the survey. Each question was led by a few themes aiming to clarify the objectives of the study.

The pilot study was administered to this group of participants, and the feedback from the pilot did not require many changes to the questions. There were a few restructurings of questions to ensure that similar questions were grouped together for better coherence. The questionnaire comprised 20 questions, which were assembled according to the sections indicated in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Distribution of questions

Questions	Study objectives/question information
1-8	Demographic information regarding participants such as age, year of study, ethnicity and discipline and multilingual status.
9-15	Perceptual information of students' descriptions and explanations regarding translanguaging as a pedagogical tool.
17	Perceptual information of student's identity in relation to translanguaging.
18-20	Information regarding interest in study and willingness to provide additional information and contact details for further contacting.

The online survey was circulated at both institutions by the respective campus administration. From both institutions, a total of 40 responded to the survey questionnaire out of an expectancy of about one hundred (100) students. Table 3.6. illustrates the distribution of respondents by programme.

Table 3.6: Survey respondents

Institution	Programmes	Number of respondents
A	Bachelor of Commerce	11
A	Bachelor of Design	2
A	Bachelor of Science	2
B	Bachelor of Education	25
Total		40

The survey is a widely recognisable tool in social research; however, in general, it is an instrument typically associated with quantitative studies for their ability to reach large audiences and for generating large, numerical data (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2023). Further to note is that the use of fully qualitative surveys is not a common occurrence by researchers and therefore not widely used (Braun et al., 2021). Nevertheless, for the studies that have administered this instrument, a standard qualitative survey generally consists of open-ended questions that are distributed to all participants in a predefined and identical form (Braun et al., 2021). There is a misconception that a survey cannot yield rich qualitative data. In fact, one of the advantages of a survey questionnaire alludes to participants being able to use their own words instead of

choosing predetermined options, thus enabling a rich and complex product of meaning making, and an account of the participants' experiences and reflections (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

The questions from the questionnaire survey were sectioned into parts that addressed different aspects of the study. The first part of the survey gathered demographic and linguistic details of the respondents. The remaining questions consisted of close and open-ended questions regarding multiple language use, attitudes and identity. These questions sought to address:

- What are the students' perceptions of the efficacy of translanguageing as a learning tool in four disciplines at the selected institutions of higher learning in Mauritius?
- To what extent does translanguageing enhance students' linguistic and cultural identity in four disciplines at the selected institutions of higher learning?

The response rate via the software application was monitored on a regular basis. When there were no new responses for a period of two weeks, I prepared the data for analysis.

3.6 Data analysis

Thematic analysis was a well-suited qualitative approach for this study, particularly for identifying emotional, cultural, and identity-related themes that emerged in relation to Kreol and translanguageing practices. Narrative analysis, a qualitative approach was found to be less suitable as the data from this study did not consist of extended life stories but rather on reflections on experiences related to linguistic practices within a social setting (Cresswell, 2023). In comparison to grounded theory, which aims to develop a theory grounded in the data, thematic analysis was found to be more attentive to identifying and analysing themes and patterns within the data.

Through thematic analysis, the qualitative data generated from the focus groups were analysed to identify recurring themes and patterns. The qualitative data from focus groups were analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns related to the use of translanguageing as pedagogical support. The survey data was analysed using descriptive statistics to summarise student responses and identify trends in their perceptions of translanguageing. The survey data used a combination of analysis methods to accommodate the different question sets

(see Table 3.7). Triangulation of the different data sources was used to strengthen the findings and provide a comprehensive understanding of the study's research objectives.

3.6.1 Focus group interviews analysis

The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed by a professional and accredited company in Mauritius in an effort to ensure authenticity of the languages from the focus-groups interviews. Of the three languages, Kreol received official orthographical recognition in 2011 (Auleear Owodally & Unjore, 2013). In previous years, written Kreol was not considered a written language (Rajah-Carrim, 2008) and individuals naturally and frequently borrowed from the French spelling system. The analysis of data was both iterative and inductive, involving recurrent reading and coding of the data based on themes that emerged throughout the research.

Although I endeavoured to employ software programs such as Altas.Ti, I soon found that analysing the data manually and systematically was more effective for my own personal engagement with the data. The data was revisited multiple times after the data was transcribed. Additionally, the transcriptions were read numerous times for different aspects and at various levels of the study. Through the process of winnowing (Guest et al., 2012), important data was then sifted from the bulk data. The recordings were also consulted several times to ensure that the data was accurately transcribed. The analysis underwent a thematic review while identifying recurring and prominent themes.

The overall analytic process followed a methodical approach. Once received, the transcriptions were organised and prepared. The themes were generated, and these were used for reinforcing the survey questionnaire.

3.6.2 Survey questionnaire analysis

Although the qualitative survey can produce structured data, Braun et al. (2021) advise against summarising responses by question. It is recommended that the dataset rather be coded and analysed in its entirety so as to avoid an underdeveloped analysis. The analysis employed a partly descriptive approach for the demographical information. However, the analysis went beyond to provide richly theorised and interpretative accounts of the data from the survey analysis (Braun et al., 2021). The analysis for the survey data was conducted with a combination

of analyses including descriptive and thematic methods, as some questions yielded qualitative data.

Table 3.7: Survey analysis methods

Questions	Study objectives/question information	Analysis method
1-8	Demographic information regarding participants such as age, year of study, ethnicity and discipline and multilingual status.	• Frequency counts and percentages (e.g., the percentage of multilingual students). • Descriptive statistics like averages (e.g., most common languages spoken).
9-15	Perceptual information of students' descriptions and explanations regarding translinguaging as a pedagogical tool.	Identification of recurring themes and patterns from students' perceptions and experiences.
17	Perceptual information of student's identity in relation to translinguaging.	Identification of recurring themes and patterns from students' perceptions and experiences.

3.7 Limitations of the study

The limiting conditions in this study are related to the common critiques of qualitative research methodology and some of which are inherent in the study's research design. Cautious thought has been given to ways of accounting for these limitations and minimising their effect. A prevailing concern is that of the researcher bias. A limitation of this study was the issue of subjectivity, or potential bias regarding the researcher's own participation in a translingual study. To minimise researcher bias, triangulation was employed using different sources of data methods, including field notes, focus groups, and the survey to cross-verify findings and reduce the impact of subjectivity. Another way to alleviate this limitation was to allow peers to review the methodology and findings for any potential bias.

Another limiting factor here is found in the data collection. Although the interviews provided rich data, the responses were recounted memories and were not viewed in actual time. However, the participants were able to seek validation from one another to confirm that they had the same recall through discussion and constant cross-checking by way of explaining as a collective their understanding of certain concepts. Nonetheless, in an effort to minimise the impact of this possible limitation, the researcher supplemented with a survey questionnaire that pursued validation, confirmation and in-depth responses.

While the selected programmes were sufficiently diverse, a limitation is related to the sample size from Institution A. In some regard, the relatively small sample size may affect the generalisability of the findings. Institution A being private lends itself to a moderate student population. In spite of the limiting factors, this study still provides valuable insights into the understanding of translanguaging practices in the Creole context of Mauritius. Institution A with three different disciplines (Bachelor of Commerce, Bachelor of Design and Bachelor of Science) where the participants were consistent in showing up for the focus group sessions.

3.8 Ethical issues

In qualitative research, the ethical considerations are of high importance, especially when there are human participants. Qualitative research of this nature can be intrusive, as the researcher is immersed into the participants' environment and time, while seeking to achieve the study's objectives. The personal lives and opinions of the participants are potentially sensitive and therefore it is the researcher's responsibility to respect and protect the rights of the informants, as well as reveal the researcher's objective, and position (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2023). At the onset, the purpose of the study was made transparent to the participants. Participants were given letters of invitation with attached consent forms that clearly stated participation was not obligatory. The participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time. Along with the study's objectives, this was verbally discussed as well as in written form. Participants who consented to participate in the study also gave consent to be audio-recorded. All the data was stored securely and was accessible only to the researcher.

Further measures in protecting the participants included keeping their identities anonymous during, and after the study. The responses presented in the data analysis do not link

to the identities of the participants. Regarding the transcriptions, the company and the researcher entered into a privacy agreement to endorse their privacy policy due the sensitive data involved. These measures were taken to protect the rights, privacy and well-being of the participants.

3.9 Summary

This chapter has outlined the research design and methodology used in this study, including the sampling selection strategy, data collection, and analysis techniques. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods strives to provide extensive insight of translanguaging as a pedagogical aid in the Mauritian higher education system.

Chapter Four

Focus Group Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

The primary goal of this study was to explore translanguaging practices in Mauritian higher education with a specific focus on two universities, one private and the other public. This chapter demonstrates how the participants' language practices in a multilingual Creole context were used to navigate meaning making. It also illustrates how translanguaging was used for deeper learning by participants.

In the sections that follow, the emerging themes describe the translanguaging practices used by students to acquire a better understanding and access difficult content. Also included in this chapter is the analysis of the students' accounts of their multilingual encounters, as well as their translanguaging patterns as ways of knowing and negotiating meaning. It also describes how translanguaging practices generate issues surrounding identity affirmation. The study also revealed that historical hegemony, as elucidated by the participants, influenced the participants' perceptions of translanguaging as an epistemological access tool.

The findings provide insight into the fluid, hybrid ways in which students use language, contributing to a more inclusive and dynamic view of language use in the tertiary education Creole context. The results in this study revealed that participants' linguistic repertoires influenced their use of translanguaging and their attitudes towards its application.

4.1 Translanguaging as a tool for enhancing understanding and meaning making

The results of the study reflect the students' engagement and learning with translanguaging as a tool for deeper learning and negotiating meaning. The sections that follow provide key themes that contributed to meaning making and enhanced the learning process. This helps to answer the question as to how translanguaging is used in different disciplines in the Mauritius higher education system, under the broader category of it being viewed as an effective tool for deeper learning and meaning making.

As the reader will note in Table 4.1 below and thereafter, the named languages have been formatted differently so linguistic patterns can be more detectible. French has been underlined;

Kreol has been boldened; and English has been italicised for ease of reference. The English translation has been provided within the square brackets.

Table 4.1: Language formatting

Language	Text format
English	<i>Italics</i>
French	<u>Underline</u>
Kreol	Bold

4.1.1 Complex interlingual repertoires

The study showed how the participants learnt and reflected through complex and fluid multilingual practices that combine linguistic and semiotic resources to negotiate and make meaning. I refer to their fluid interactions as “Complex Interlingual Repertoires”, which are indicative of a multilingual speaker whose communication strategies involve an extensive and adaptive mix of languages, reflecting a sophisticated and flexible use of linguistic resources across languages. It suggests that they are not only using different languages but are also blending these languages in creative, strategic, and context-dependent ways to express meaning.

The participants’ complex translingual interactions are demonstrated through their communicative interactions in the extract that follows. An example of how meaning is negotiated via complex interlingual repertoires is illustrated in Extract 4.1.1. The participants’ repertoires typically consist of English, French, and Kreol, and to distinguish between the languages more noticeably, each one is accentuated with a different effect. For this study, I refer to these languages as “named languages”, which have been bounded and recognised socially or institutionally, while translanguaging is said to transcend these boundaries (Li, 2018; Otheguy et al., 2015; Wei & García, 2022),

The discussion in Extract 4.1.1 depicts the participants’ use of translanguaging as they recalled a specific moment during one of their Arts and Design lectures. In response to the question as to how difficult concepts were managed during their lectures, the participants were reflecting on an occasion when a concept was particularly challenging for them to understand. They, thus, began to unpack their understanding this concept using this trilingual combination. In

line with the ethical requirements, pseudonyms have been used to protect the identities of the participating students.

Extract 4.1.1

Jacques: Comme par exemple [For instance...], **ti ena enn moman nou pa ti pe konpran ki apel** [there was a time when we could not grasp...] *one-point e* [and] *two-point perspectives*.

Sue: J'allais dire ça [I was about to say that...]

Interviewer: *One point and two-point perspectives?*

Sue: *Vanishing points.*

Interviewer: *Vanishing points? Mwa mo pa kone kiete sa* [I don't know what this means].

Sue: Tu vas lui expliquer? [Are you going to explain to her?] (Sue looks to the others before taking the initiative)

Interviewer: **Si to kapav** [If you can].

Sue: Si par exemple... [If, for example...] **Si sa portab-la**, [if the mobile phone] c'est straight, [it is straight,] il n'y a qu'un seul vanishing point, [there's only one vanishing point,] mais si c'est un peu [but if it's a bit] (Sue moves the mobile phone at a different angle) ... comme ça qu'elle avait dit, non?... [she (the lecturer) explained it to us like that, right?] (Sue looks for validation from the others) là on a sa de pwin-la avek sa de pwin-la, non? [here we have two points here and two points here, right?] (Sue looks for validation from the others)

In the extract, Jacques precisely remembers when the learners could not comprehend the meaning of “one-point” and “two-point perspectives”. He illustrates this by the expression, “Comme par exemple, ti ena enn moman nou pa ti pe konpran ki apel one-point e two-point perspectives”. Sue picks up by immediately agreeing with Jacques's example when she says, “J'allais dire ça”, an indication that she was also about to call out that exact example, which is confirmation this was a difficult notion for her to grasp as well. The interviewer here clarifies

which concept the participants are referring to and Sue then explains that she is referring to “vanishing points”. The interviewer states that she does not know what this means (Mwa mo pa kone kiete sa).

Recollecting what the lecturer had said in their class, Sue proceeds to explain the concept of “vanishing points” as indicated by the phrase, “...comme ça qu’elle avait dit, non?” In her description of the design concept of “vanishing points” to the rest of the group members, she voluntarily uses her mobile phone as the object to make this idea more visually stimulating. Sue provides a creative and spontaneous way to explain the notion, as seen in her statement in the first sentence, “Si sa portab-la, c’est straight, il n’y a qu’un seul vanishing point”). Here, she says using the three languages, that if the mobile is straight, there will only be one vanishing point. However, when she moves the mobile phone at another angle, there will be two vanishing points (sa de pwin-la avek sa de pwin-la, non?).

Another observation during her explanation of “vanishing points” is Sue’s use of paralinguistic structures. As a way to effectively get validation from her peers, she distinctly pauses or hesitates while she waits for acknowledgement from her peers – something considered a dominant discourse pattern during discussions among the participants. This is revealed at the end of the last two utterances with the word “non” (right?), which is a way to ensure full participation and a unified understanding of the concept. The reliance on looking, waiting and spatial features along with the application of a mobile phone, as observed, complement Sue’s linguistic repertoire. There is an intersection of visual and verbal cues complementing each for meaning making around the concept of vanishing point.

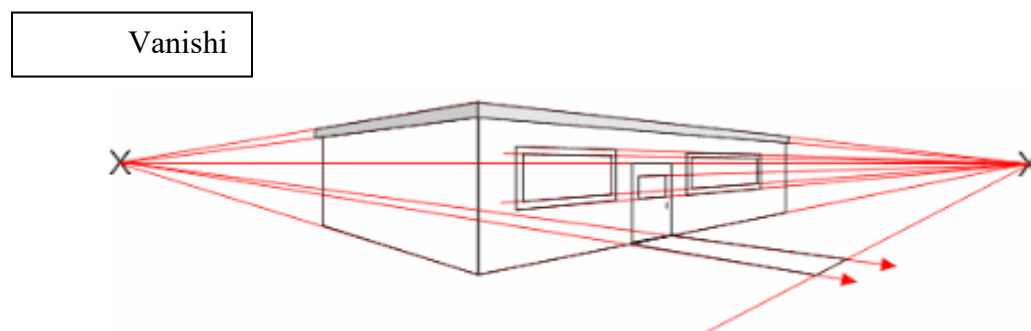
Worth noting here is that Sue and Jacques use a variety of socially named languages; namely, Kreol, French, and English simultaneously to express the meaning of vanishing points and point-perspectives while at the same time using a visual object in the form of a mobile phone. Sue’s linguistic moves reflect a remarkable translanguaging pattern. First, she starts the utterance in French (underlined), the second move is in Kreol (**in bold**), the third move she makes is in French (underlined), then English (*in italics*). Sue’s fifth move goes back to French (underlined), which is then followed by English again (*in italics*). Her seventh move in this extract is in French (underlined) and her final move is in Kreol (**in bold**). Altogether, there are

eight linguistic moves, with each socially named language expressing a continuum of meaning segments supporting one idea. At surface level, there seems to be language differences represented in several language breaks but from a meaning-making perspective, there is a continuum of thought pattern that surpasses the different languages as perceived by the hearer. In this connection, it is possible to see that both Jacques and Sue's use of linguistic moves represents a continuation of a coherent meaning-making process in the explanation of vanishing points. Externally, through the societal vision of named languages, there are eight moves but for the participants there is but one expression in a continuum of meaning segments.

Previous work on translanguaging has shown that multilingual users are able to transcend what are socially named “linguistic boxes” (Makalela, 2015) in favour of meaning making that takes place in their mental spaces through what is referred to as repertoires (Wei & García 2022; Makalela, 2022). With the same idea flowing from one language to another, the meaning-making process here is illustrated with language overlapping. The socially named languages have overlapped in multiple moves that are natural and normal ways of sense making. Equally, there are higher order thinking skills seen in this singular and unitary system of meaning making. This is in support of unitary view of translanguaging that multilinguals have one continuum or one system in which they make meaning although the languages may be different (Otheguy et al., 2015; Wei & García 2022).

To optimise the explanation of the concept of “vanishing points”, Jacques also provides a visual representation to ensure that their description is clear. The exact image provided by Jacques is presented below (Figure 4.1). It clearly shows the points where the viewpoints are said to “vanish”. Jacques also provides an explanation of the visual to ensure that the concept is described more effectively.

Figure 4.1: Vanishing points



Jacques: First of all, one- and two-point perspectives are often used in design, art, and architecture. It is all about the angles, perspective and of how you will see an object based on your position. This house, there has a two-point perspective because it has two vanishing points. You can see the two vanishing points labelled as 'X' in each extremity. In this image, you are in a 3/4 angle. You won't see plain objects such as rectangles, circles or squares as they are not facing towards you. The house is also big, so you won't see the top of the roof as well.

The visual provided by Jacques coupled with the discussion in Extract 4.1.1 confirms that the participants have an accurate and collective understanding of the notion of point-perspectives. Their use of the mobile phone initially illustrates creativity and spontaneity aimed to express their understanding of this concept. The visual provided by Jacques reaffirms that their comprehension is mutual through a series of supportive input. The finding is cognisant of “translanguaging spaces” that promote multilinguals the opportunity to be fully immersive in their creative and critical encounters with the assistance of not only their linguistic resources but also their semiotic resources (Wei, 2011a). The combination of these practices is able to enhance communication, learning and expression in diverse settings. This finding illustrates how translanguaging is used as a tool for deeper learning to negotiate meaning in a multilingual Creole context.

4.1.2 Interspeaker validation

This research posits that peer interactions became more inclusive when students were not restricted to a single language and could engage meaningfully using the languages they know. In

the previous section, in Extract 4.1.1, the participants demonstrated a pattern where they used the languages in their repertoire to express their collective expression of thought. In addition to this, the results of the study have found that the participants make meaningful connections by validating their understanding against that of their peers. The extract below illustrates how the participants use their multilingual repertoire in a meaningful way to explain more difficult concepts. This finding is further illustrated in Extract 4.1.2 below.

Extract 4.1.2

Jacques: Faisons une ligne-là disons. [Let's draw a line here.] **Nou swazir, ale**, *two-point perspectives*. [We choose, let us say, two-point perspectives.] *Si nou nou pa pou kav explik coum sa...* [If we cannot explain it this way...]

(Jacques draws a line next to the mobile phone, and looks at the others for confirmation)

Yansley: **Sa two points sa?** [Are these two points?]

Jacques : *Two points. Akoz sa nou met pwin la, non?* [Two points. That's why we put the point here, right?] (Jacques looks to the others for validation)

Jacques's utterance is in response to what Sue has said in the previous connection. It is in reference to how the lecturer explained the concept (*là on a sa de pwin-la avek sa de pwin-la, non?*). This is seen in his expression, "Faisons une ligne-là disons. Nou swazir, ale, two-point perspectives. Si nou nou pa pou kav explik coum sa...". Here, Jacques picks up from Sue's mobile phone description by drawing a line next to the mobile phone so that the explanation of "vanishing point" is elucidated as a supplementary action and a form of collaborative learning.

The next speaker, Yansley, also actively part of this conversation, asks Jacques about the two points, in relation to Sue's initial point, and the point Jacques is making. Yansley seeks clarification from Jacques by asking whether this is an illustration of two-point perspectives (*Sa two points sa?*). Notably, this dialogue is carried out through a continued peer-to-peer, lateral verification. Jacques then confirms with Yansley that it is indeed "two points".

The key point to note in these interactions is the continuous need for the participants to seek validation from one another. Extracts 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 both demonstrate recurrent requirements without losing meaning during their collaborative efforts to explain the concept. This translanguaging practice is indicative of the observation that validation between these multilinguals enhanced deeper understanding of the subject matter under discussion. This is a way of seeking support for the purpose of clearer articulation and verifying whether one's understanding is matched to the other. This ensures a standardisation of meaning making among learners and reinforces their understanding of difficult concepts.

It is worth repeating that although the participants' translanguaging expressions are carried out in several linguistic moves underpinned by named languages, their shared meaning is evidently mutually comprehensible. Their process of shared meaning through the use of translanguaging expressions has an underlying commonality in the negotiation of meaning. This finding is in keeping with the view that multilingual speakers in complex encounters display high levels of mutual inter-comprehensibility. The findings support the theories that translanguaging promotes collaborative learning, and student engagement by breaking down linguistic barriers (Hungwe & McCabe, 2020; Hamman-Otiz et al., 2025; Kim & Kim, 2024), and that no one socially named language is complete without the other (Makalela, 2015, 2022).

4.1.3 Instructors' use of translanguaging for content accessibility

Translanguaging was also a significant part of the instructors' repertoires during the lectures. Although the instructors were not interviewed or observed, the participants reported on their instructors frequently engaging in multilingual communicative interactions for different reasons. The results indicate that multiple language use is prevalent during lectures for specific reasons. The following extract presents an example of how instructors engage in multilingual communication to make concepts more accessible to students.

Extract 4.1.3

Paul: Comme par exemple, **sipa enn mo Angle inpe tro konplike, bizin dekrir en Kreol** [For example, if there is an English word that is too complicated, that needs explaining it would need to be explained in Kreol...]

- Interviewer: **Be kouma zot dekrir sa mo-la? Donn mwa enn lexanp** [So how is the word described? Give me an example]
- Jean: **Normalman, li ti pe explik nou inpe lor modernism, bann ansien *style painting*. Kan li ti pe explik nou an Angle, ena bokou pa pe konpran. Anfin, kav zot inn konpran, me ti inpe difisil, bann mo-la ti inpe difisil, lerla li'nn redir nou li an Kreol. Li'nn explik nou bien.** [The lecturer was explaining Modernism to us, the ancient style of painting. When explained to us in English, there were many (students) who could not understand. Well, maybe they could understand, but it was a bit difficult, the words were a bit difficult, then she re-explained in Kreol. The lecturer explained it well.]
- Sandy: **Fer komsa dire dekrir l'image. Li pou dekrir plis an Franse, an Kreol.** [Say the lecturer describes an image, they would describe it more in French, in Kreol.]

The extract provides two reasons for instructors to make use of their linguistic resources. Paul refers to a complicated concept and Sandy refers to the description of images. The interviewer asked the participants for some examples or instances of when multiple languages would be used and reasons for those. Paul explains that other languages, like Kreol, are used during lectures, with this statement: “Comme par exemple, sipa enn mo Angle inpe tro konplike, bizin dekrir en Kreol”. He says that if an English word is too complicated, the use of other languages would naturally be used by their instructor. Jean then follows with a specific classroom encounter. His example refers to when a difficult concept like “Modernism” needed explaining. Paul is conveying here that when the lecturer was using English to explain, it was evident that a large number of students did not fully grasp the concept, which is illustrated in the utterance: “Kan li ti pe explik nou an Angle, ena bokou pa pe konpran...”. He notes further that when explained again using other linguistic resources such as Kreol, the lecturer “explained it well” as illustrated in the sentence, “Li'nn explik nou bien”. Paul's statement provides an insight that English alone makes learning complicated for the students in this Mauritius institution, while Jean recalled that the lecturer re-explained in Kreol well enough for the students to understand. Additionally, Sandy adds that other languages are used, especially when images need to be described. She explains that when the lecturer describes an image, she does this more with the

use of French and Kreol (“Fer komsi dire dekrir l’image. Li pou dekrir plis an Franse, an Kreol”).

This finding is consistent with the research on translanguaging, which highlights the instructor as a key role in aiding students to navigate various contexts for inclusive communication, using all their linguistic resources to adapt to the same level of competence as the student (Putra, 2024). Translanguaging for multilingual speakers has often resurfaced in the higher education context for the better understanding of content, especially where the medium of instruction is not the home language (Makalela, 2015; Mazak & Carroll, 2017; Mgijima & Makalela, 2021; Kirsch, 2020; Steinhagen & Said 2021).

As mentioned earlier, in Mauritius, English is the language of instruction, with written and printed materials also predominantly in English (Tirvassen & Ramasawmy, 2017). This translingual practice goes against the official policy where the language of instruction in Mauritius is English (Rajah-Carrim, 2008; Tirvassen & Ramasawmy, 2017) and the idea that English is the academic language through which the students have learned all the conceptual terminologies is not necessarily a true representation.

4.1.4 Multilingual strategies to simplify complex subjects

Translanguaging plays an important role in explaining difficult concepts, as was seen in the previous sections. The extract below alludes to multiple language use as a way of simplifying learning and explaining concepts that were otherwise too difficult to comprehend. In the extract below, Collin provides an example during lectures for difficult concepts or unfamiliar terminologies. The responses revealed that multiple language use was more frequently used by the instructor for the following reasons to explain difficult concepts or unfamiliar terminologies.

Extract 4.1.4

Collin: ...when explaining difficult chapters. For example, explaining [M]orphology to students were [was] a bit difficult. So, for a student to grasp better the concept of [M]orphology, he/she should understand how [M]orphology applies firstly in his or her maternal language and this might help the student to connect better to the concerned chapter. There are also some words in French whereby their

definitions are sometimes confusing. Explaining these words to learners in their mother tongue language can be advantageous, in terms that it may help students to learn the language in course.

Morphology is a subject area in linguistics that studies the structures of words. It is seen as a fundamental aspect of linguistics and is considered a key foundation for the acquisition of other linguistic areas. Morphology is primarily composed of specialised concepts and in Extract 4.1.4, Collin is responding to the question of when multiple language use was notably more frequent during lectures. As a subject with specialised concepts, Collin explains that it is better for students to grasp the concept in their mother tongue for facilitating and understanding of the content. Collin's explanation reinforces the notion that the use of repertoire languages, in this case the mother tongue, as a source is required and welcomed in the advancement of knowledge access and understanding concepts that might not be easy to comprehend for learners. Like previous studies, the use of multiple languages in the classroom was perceived as beneficial in explaining difficult concepts (Mbirmi-Hungwe, 2021; Rafi & Morgan, 2024; Xu & Fang, 2024). This finding amplifies the notion of the translanguaging position that is often taken by instructors, in different disciplines, seeking to resolve issues of epistemic incongruence between the preferred monolingual stances and multilingual ways of being and acting prevalent in their classrooms (García & Li Wei, 2014).

There were three main reasons for the need of multiple language use by instructors. The study revealed that translingual use was more present during lectures when there were complicated English words, when there was difficulty in understanding concepts, and when the description of images was required. Instructors play a crucial role in implementing translanguaging effectively, whether it is spontaneous or purposeful. Studies suggest that teachers' attitudes towards translanguaging can influence its success (Rafi & Morgan, 2024) and in the Mauritian context of higher education, it has been illustrated that instructors regularly use their language resources, as identified here.

4.2 Hierarchical language structures and power dynamics

The preceding section described the benefits of translanguaging as a strategy for deeper learning and negotiating meaning through students' responses and recollections. However, while

translanguaging was seen as a valuable approach, it became apparent that the participants perceived the languages in their repertoires differently, which in turn influenced their translanguaging insights and practices. This section explores the language hierarchies in the higher education system of Mauritius, shaped by students' perceptions of translanguaging. The stratification of languages is evident in their dominance and the ways in which they are perceived. Language has a subliminal effect on learners, as the findings of this study demonstrate. It can be said that a direct consequence of language hegemony is the colonisation of the conscience. Although participants acknowledged and appreciated the use of translanguaging practices for meaning making and overcoming difficult concepts, they also revealed, either directly or indirectly, that the languages in their repertoires held different statuses. This section examines how power dynamics, related to language prestige, affect both student participation and the implementation of translanguaging strategies in the classroom.

4.2.1 Historical programming

The legacy of colonialism may have left their speakers in an inferior position, and the power imbalance may still be seen in its society. Extract 4.2.1 is an example of how deeply affected the participants are by the post-colonial influence. I found that this topic surfaced on several occasions, and with different groups, and it became a necessity to present this as a theme because these discussions provide insightful understanding of their use and practice of (trans) languaging. It also illustrates how historical programming shaped and influenced current practices.

In Extract 4.2.1 below, two participants are reflecting on their high school experience where the instructors asserted that they use either English or French over Kreol. Although they are now at tertiary level, their responses here revealed how this mindset shaped their perceptions of language. This revelation provided insight into how their mindsets were formed in their earlier years of education. These responses stemmed from the discussion on multilingual practices or use of other languages during in their lecture. Although the participants previously stated that there was spontaneous translanguaging, notably, the participants felt the need to mention their language experiences in their former years, during high school.

Extract 4.2.1.a

- Tania: **Mem kan mo ti dan kolez osi, kan nou ti koz sipa enn bout Kreol ek mo profeser, bann-la ti pe aret nou e dir nou** [Even when I was in high school as well, when we were speaking a bit in Kreol and my teachers would stop us and say to us...]: “Oui, les filles...” [Yes, girls...]
- Hema : “En anglais ou français, s’il vous plait”. [In English or French, please].
- Tania: **Zot dir nou** [They say]: Les filles, la moindre des choses, c’est de parler en français ou en anglais [Girls, the least you can do is speak in English or French].
Ou pe konpran? [Do you understand?]

Even though the participants attended different high schools, it was apparent from their individual responses that there were close similarities in their experiences. The participants’ responses reveal the dominance of English and French vis-à-vis Kreol. Language hegemony, in this context, reflects their internalised beliefs favouring these two languages, which leads to the marginalisation of Kreol. In simpler terms, the participants’ responses exposed their inner thoughts and self-perceptions, of which they may not be fully aware.

It was not anticipated that their reflections on Kreol during the participants’ high school years would surface during discussions fixed around their lecture room practices. I provide another example for when this topic emerged from a participant from a completely different group. A discussion, which began with the use of multiple languages during lectures, resulted in the following response:

Extract 4.2.1.b

- Dylan: **Kouma mo ti dir, dan kolez, kan nou ti pe koz Kreol pou fer prezantasion, bann-la pa ti les nou koz Kreol. Pa zis prezantasion, kan nou koz Kreol an zeneral dan klas, bann-la dir nou : “pa koz Kreol, c’est Franse”**. [Like I said, in high school, when we were speaking Kreol when doing presentations, they did not allow us to speak Kreol. Not just for presentations, when we spoke Kreol in general in class, they said to us: “don’t speak Kreol, speak French”].

Remembering their past experiences apropos multiple language use in classrooms during high school illustrated the sternness of their instructors for their use of Kreol. The participants seemed to reflect on this not only as an indication of historical programming but also to compare their multiple language use during lectures while completing their tertiary education. As seen in the extracts, the participants recognised the benefits of having all the languages for deeper learning and understanding.

During the colonial period, colonial languages were employed in formal contexts, where a standardised version was regarded as crucial for fulfilling societal roles (Krämer et al., 2021). Even decades after Mauritius having gained its independence, European languages continue to be esteemed in contrast to languages like Kreol. For instance, English is still viewed as the language of education; however, in practice this might not reflect the current situation accurately. It is also similar in many other parts of the world where colonisation has taken place. From the extracts provided, it is apparent that historical programming is deeply rooted in the students' perceptions and beliefs concerning the functions and use of languages in education and society. The extracts below illustrate their perception of English.

4.2.3 *English as “better”*

In the discussion below, the participants are discussing a communication module that requires the use of various applied English language skills. This question posed here was whether other languages like French and Kreol were used during this lecture.

Extract 4.2.3

Jean: *Yeah. Mass Communication students, those who make essays every time, journals, summaries, etc., we have to speak in English...*

Interviewer: *You are forced to speak English?*

Jean: *No, but it's better because our class is made like... **kouma dir sa...?** [how to say this...?]*

Interviewer: **Dir an Kreol, pena problem.** [Say it in Kreol, no problem].

- Jean: **Koumadir li meyer pou nou ki nou aprann Angle.** [Like it's better for us to learn English]
- Simla: *To be more fluent.* **Pou pli abitie ek li.** [To get used to it]
- Jean: **Donk, nou pou bizin koz Angle pou resli gagn pratik-la.** [So, we will have to speak English to get practice]
- Yani: **Vu ki se enn klas Angle, li preferab nou koz Angle. Sinon, bann-la pa obliz nou.** [Given that it is an English class, it is better we speak English. However, they do not force us.]

Jean explains that their assessments comprise of written assessments, such as essays and summaries, and his deduction is that they “have to speak in English”. The interviewer then clarifies whether the participants were forced to speak in English. Jean’s response, in searching to express in English but instead finds it easier to explain himself in Kreol, states that it is not forced but it is “better” to use English. His view is subsequently supported by his peers in this dialogue. Simla’s contribution of this view is the need “to be more fluent” and Yani explains in Kreol that they must speak English to get practice (“nou bisin koz Angle pou resli gagn pratik-la”).

Even though the participants had previously shown that translanguaging effectively and creatively assisted in negotiating and making meaning, the results show that there is an innate historical hegemony that precedes English as a higher-ranking language. English has a high status often mistaken for the official language in Mauritius even with its minimal use (Carpooran, 2003; Tirvassen, 2009). Each participant is in support of English being “better” although institutionally it is not obligatory. The responses in the extract above indicate that the participants perceive the use of English as a necessity for their overall progress and academic success. The language hierarchy played a role in how English was perceived and used by the participants. Social stratification of languages can be illustrated in how the participants perceive the use and importance of English. These themes address underlying aspects of their linguistic identity.

4.3 Small group spaces

When students were not restricted by rigid linguistic boundaries, they were able to engage with content more deeply, which promotes creativity and builds confidence. This is considered a fundamental finding of the study. In Extract 4.3, the participants (BCom students in a module called *Fundamentals of Management*) are explaining how they navigate in smaller groups. Smaller groups are seen to be effective pedagogical strategies in that they allow students their full expression and creativity. The extract below reveals their use of communicative strategies.

Extract 4.3

Tania: **Lerla nou travay an *group work* koumadir. Nou ena bann tablo koumadir bann white board koumsa.** [Then we work in groups. We have those boards, like whiteboards].

Helen: ***White board-la* nou ekri lor la. An Angle, an Kreol, an Franse tou.** [We write on the whiteboard. In English, in Kreol, in French as well].

Tania: **Lerla koumadir nou travay an ekip et puis, nou met nou bann repons lor tablo. Firdoz pou poz sak group enn kestion, lerla si li anvi koze li, lerla li pou explike kifer nou'nn donn tel, tel repons. Ofet, ou bien si nou anvi koumadir dan group-la sakenn son tour koze, lerla nou fer li koumsa. Li depan.** [Then we work as a team and put our answers on the board. Firdoz (lecturer) will ask each group a question, and then if she wants to talk, then she will explain why we've given the answers we've given. In fact, or, if each of us wants to have a turn to speak, then we do it that way. It depends.]

Tania: **Lerla si koumadir ou pa pe kav, koumadir ou pa pe gagn mo-la an Angle, lerla ou dir li sipa an Kreol ou an Franse. Lerla ou kontign ek ou Angle. Me sinon zot pa koup pwin, me pou prezantasion zot kav koup pwin parski ou sipoze bien prepar ou tousala e bizin koz an Angle.** [Then, if like you can't seem to get the English word then you can say it in Kreol or in French. Then you continue in English. But otherwise, points will not be deducted, but for the

presentation they might deduct points because you are supposed to be well prepared and all that and you have to speak English].

In this specific instance, they are talking about their usual (trans)languaging practices during tutorials. The participants here explain that this is considered group work, and that they worked as a team during these sessions. They were typically able to use their full repertoires and were comfortable, without any restrictions or penalisation (such as marks being deducted) by the instructor, as explained by Tania (...zot pa koup pwin). During their session, the group is preparing a presentation based on the content they were working on while being able to brainstorm and make meaning without any limitations to their linguistic resources during the planning process. Helen also explains that they will use all the languages, even for when writing on the whiteboard. This is a crucial aspect as it illustrates that subject matter must be processed and digested (Baker, 2011). In other words, in a translanguaging space, students make sense of the material or content to participate. Invariably, those who enable the practice of translanguaging create affordances whereby opportunities for epistemic access become manageable. The participants' translingual performance is situated in a "translanguaging space", which is referred to by Li Wei (2011) as a created opportunity that builds on creativity and criticality – two fundamental aspects in multilingual practices. This is reinforced in translanguaging theory where the emphasis is on "meaning making" (Baker, 2011; Garcia & Wei, 2014).

4.4 Summary

This chapter provided an analysis and interpretation of the findings from the focus groups. Specifically, the study sought to address how translanguaging was used as a tool for deeper learning and epistemological access in different disciplines at the selected institutions. Several themes emerged, which were then categorised into broader themes.

4.4.1 *Theme 1: Translanguaging as a tool for enhancing understanding and meaning making*

Numerous findings emerged that illustrated in the broader sense how translanguaging was effectively used as a tool for understanding and meaning making. These findings were labelled under the four sub-themes below. Each sub-theme provides a summary of the findings.

4.4.1.1 *Sub-theme 1a: Complex interlingual repertoires*

The findings related to this sub-theme illustrated that the students were able to negotiate meaning while explaining a concept that was considered complex and appeared to be chaotic at surface level because of the use of their multilingual repertoires. When carefully observed, a few activities could be identified. They used semiotic resources in a creative and critical way to support their linguistic expressions when forming meaning. The students also ensured that their understanding was undisputed, which assured that the concept was understood. This could be described as a display of higher-order thinking skills. Their use of resources showed flexibility and adaptability to move in strategic ways of making sense through a continuum of thought patterns between speakers.

4.4.1.2 *Sub-theme 1b: Interspeaker validation*

This sub-theme was found to feature prominently during discussions that involved understanding content. There was a distinctive pattern when students required confirmation as a way of asking for support. This finding demonstrates that through collaboration and mutual support, students were able to implement standardised understanding of different subjects, including topics that were at times more difficult to interpret. The results showed that the students were able to make meaningful connections by seeking validation from their peers. They were seen to use their linguistic resources, in this case the trilingual combination of English, French, and Kreol, in an unrestricted fashion to explain concepts that they learned in English.

4.4.1.3 *Sub-theme 1c: Instructor's use of translanguaging for content accessibility*

A sub-theme that emerged from the focus groups was that the students' instructors also used translanguaging to make content more accessible for their students. According to the students, this was a frequent occurrence, especially when content-specific terminologies were being introduced or explained. Instructors are key players when it comes to the implementation of multilingual encounters in order to make content more accessible to learners.

4.4.1.4 *Sub-theme 1d: Multilingual strategies to simplify complex subjects*

This finding reveals that the choices of languages by instructors is a strategic tool for reinforcing the comprehension of concepts that are difficult for students. This amplifies the

translanguaging position that is frequently taken by instructors in different disciplines as a way to resolve issues of epistemic incongruence effectively. It further implies that the practice is a reflection of instructors' positive attitudes towards the use of translanguaging as a tool for learning.

4.4.2 Theme 2: Hierarchical language structures and power dynamics

This recurring theme occurred so frequently that it could not be ignored. The roles that languages play in the Mauritian context illustrate that languages are situated politically and economically. While exploring the students' perceptions of the efficacy of translanguaging as a learning tool, it became clear that their mindsets were still shaped by their colonial pasts.

4.4.2.1 Sub-theme 2a: Historical programming

It was found that the education system is still dictated by colonial languages, even with multilingual status and multilingual people. The students regularly explained that in the education context, high school teachers already expected of them to speak English or French. Their teachers corrected them if any Kreol was heard. Although Mauritius is an independent state, neocolonial ideologies are clearly influencing the way language is viewed and practised. Kreol often carries negative connotations, overpowered by English and French, which enjoy a higher social status.

4.4.2.2 Sub-theme 2b: English as “better”

English may be known as the language of education and the medium of instruction in the theoretical sense, but this is not necessarily what occurs in practice. The data shows that translanguaging practices are a common occurrence in higher learning for several reasons. Yet, the study revealed that students regarded English as a better language that they needed to be able to speak. In comparison to their years in high school, the students explained that they were not forced to speak English by their instructors at university. Instead, they felt that it was more beneficial to them at university if they did speak English. This suggests that there is an inherent perception that English carries a higher importance, even as the language that is spoken the least. The preference to retain English in education stems from the hierarchical power dynamics of post-colonial effects (Rughoonundun-Chellpermal, 2022). While Kreol is often praised as a significant marker of national identity, it is often criticised for limiting scholars (Rajah-Carrim,

2007). This finding aligns with the language ideologies discussed in the literature review, where English and French are often perceived as powerful, prestigious, and creating pathways to social and economic success (Wigglesworth et al., 2013). This finding highlights the power dynamics discussed by García and Li Wei (2014), where translanguaging practices can be restricted by societal perception of language hierarchies.

4.4.3 Theme 3: Small group spaces

In the context of small group spaces, the students worked as a team. This was when their instructors gave them an activity to work through, and they had to present their work afterwards to show understanding. This added another element of academic literacy skills, namely that the students navigate meaning by writing down definitions and explaining ideas to one another. Some were reported to write in Kreol and French, or in all three languages, in order to make sense of the content in preparation for the presentation. They reported enjoying having use of the whiteboard, which they used without any restrictions. This finding reflects the translanguaging phenomenon according to which multilinguals can be linguistically fluid, drawing on whichever language is needed and having flexible experiences without restrictions. This finding shows that small group spaces provide optimised opportunities for translanguaging to take place.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter showed that translanguaging was used as a tool for deeper learning and epistemological access. The themes that were identified support the notion of translingual practices as an effective way to enhance meaning among students while navigating difficult concepts and making meaning in varying contexts. Translanguaging facilitates understanding, encourages teamwork, and provides a supportive environment when experienced freely. While translanguaging promotes an inclusive and supportive environment for the multilingual student, it is also important to note the juxtaposition between the need for translanguaging as a necessary part of academic success and the inherent colonial ties that English and French represent in this context.

Chapter Five

Survey Findings: Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter explores the participants' perceptions of translanguaging practices from a survey of 40 first-year undergraduates at the selected Mauritian institutions of higher education, focusing on their encounters with translingual practices. In the first section of the chapter, I present the results from the survey responses. The analysis presented is based on the data collected from the participants' responses to the survey, analysed through frequency analysis and thematic coding. This approach allows for the classification of key themes and patterns related to the participants' experiences with translanguaging. The analysis is framed through the lens of translanguaging theory, which underscores the flexible and fluid language practices that support the overall learning experience. Each theme is discussed under broader categories of beliefs and perceptions in relation to translanguaging experiences. I then expand on each theme.

It was evident from the findings of Chapter Four that translingual practices facilitated deeper learning and meaning making in the Mauritius higher education context. Chapter Five's objective is to explore students' perceptions of translanguaging as a pedagogical learning tool and to establish how translanguaging enhances cultural and linguistic identity. It aims to explore the participants' perspectives on the use of translanguaging in their academic settings, considering that their views on translanguaging may influence its application as students.

The second part of this chapter explores the role of translanguaging in supporting or enhancing students' cultural and linguistic identity. This aims to provide insights into how translanguaging influences the students' sense of belonging through the affirmation of identity. The key themes are presented with examples that illustrate the theme, together with a discussion of each theme.

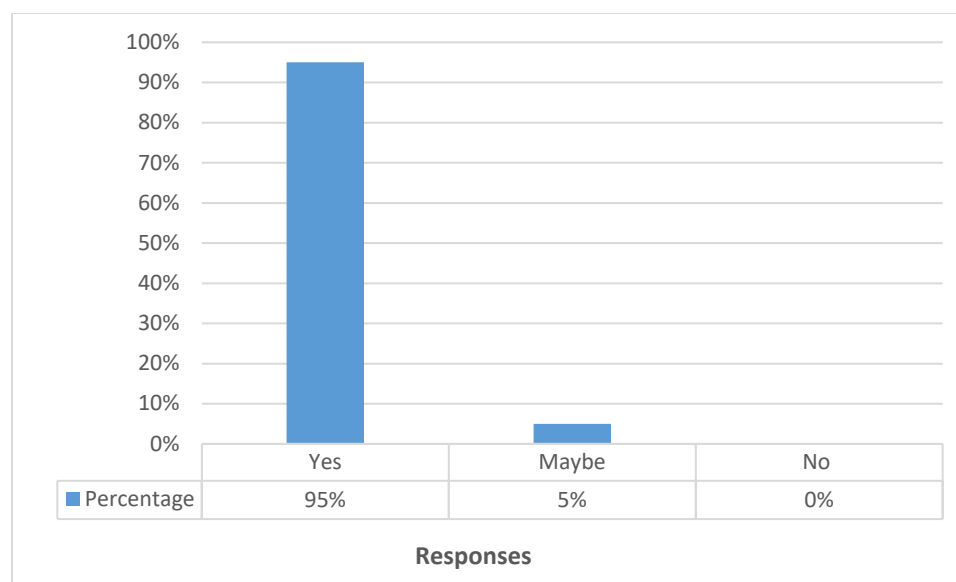
5.1 Students' perception of translanguaging as a pedagogical learning tool

The objective here was to investigate the students' perceptions of translanguaging as a pedagogical practice and how it influenced their learning. To gain some insight into this, the participants were asked whether the use of multiple languages was helpful to them as students,

and whether this helped in understanding difficult concepts. Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2 that follow illustrate their perceptions of translanguageing according to their responses.

5.1.1 *Students' perception of translanguageing as helpful*

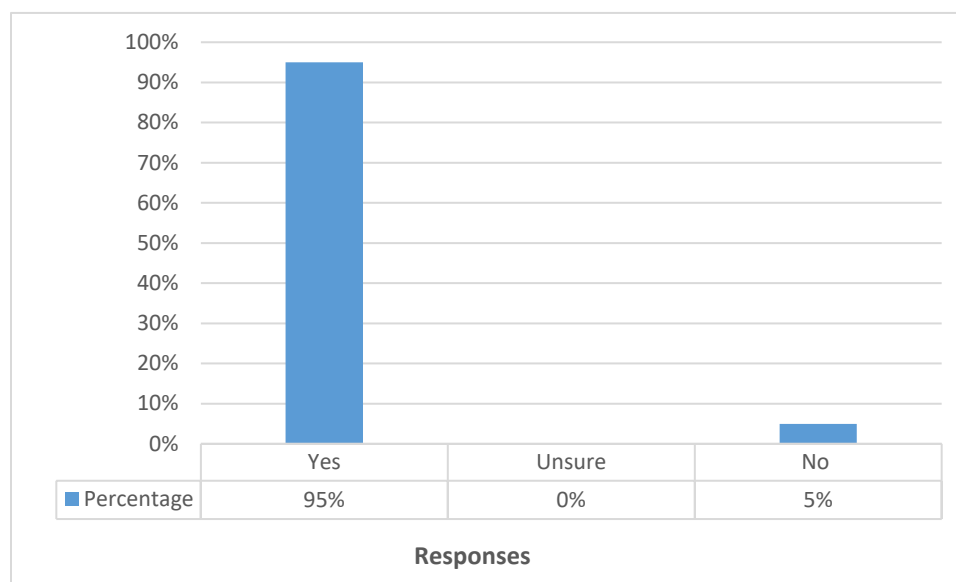
Figure 5.1: Helpfulness



Responses to the survey indicated that the use of multiple languages during lectures was considered helpful. A remarkable 95% of respondents selected “yes” to the question whether translanguageing was helpful to them as students during lectures. A much smaller number of respondents expressed uncertainty, with “maybe” as their response. This suggests that some were still uncertain about its application and use in educational settings, which may be attributable to other factors, like language preference or subject dependency. While only 5% were uncertain, it is noteworthy to mention that no one reported that the use of multiple languages was unhelpful. These results indicate that the majority recognised translanguageing as a valuable tool.

5.1.2 *Students' perception of translanguaging for understanding difficult concepts*

Figure 5.2: Difficult concepts



This representation is directed specifically towards the use of multiple languages for understanding a difficult concept or unfamiliar terminology. According to the participants' responses, a significant 95% answered positively to the question whether various languages helped with understanding a difficult concept or unfamiliar terminology. A total of 5% answered "no" to this question.

Overall, according to the data, it may be acknowledged that students viewed translanguaging as a useful tool during the lectures, which is essentially when discussions and learning take place. This supports the notion that translanguaging serves as a valuable pedagogical tool when it comes to enhancing comprehension and engagement.

The graphs represent a general baseline for the students' view on translingual practices for academic purposes. In support of the data represented in the graphs, the next section presents and discusses the participants' individual experiences, which provide further insights into how translanguaging in higher education is perceived in a multilingual Creole context.

5.2 Students' perceptions on translinguaging experiences

To gain understanding and insight into their learning experiences in relation to translingual practices, the participants were asked to provide examples of when multilingual use was more prominent during their lectures. This question was purposely open-ended, which allowed for elaborate responses. The students shared rich examples and descriptive explanations based on their view and experiences of translinguaging. When analysing the frequency of their examples, it was found that their responses could be grouped into similar themes. Their responses were measured by the regularity of the expression and categorised accordingly. The identified themes, along with their frequency, are illustrated in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Key themes

	Themes	Frequency
5.2.1	Flexible translingual practices for dealing with difficult concepts	55.0%
5.2.2	Mother tongue as inclusive and supportive approach	22.5%
5.2.3	New concepts and terminologies	15.0%
5.2.4	Comfort and Mauritian context familiarity	10.0%

The participants highlighted several key translingual practices they experienced during their lectures. As illustrated in Table 5.1, the most prominent was the use of flexible translingual strategies to navigate difficult concepts (55%). Additionally, as beneficial to translinguaging practices during lectures, the use of their mother tongue was seen as an inclusive and supportive approach that made content clear and more accessible (22.5%). Participants also mentioned the importance of understanding new concepts and terminologies (15%) with the use of translingual practices, as well as the comfort provided by the familiarity of examples from the Mauritian context (10%). Translation classes and making jokes were also noted as minor but relevant examples when translingual practices were noted (5% each). These themes are further explored below, with examples to illustrate each one.

5.2.1 *Flexible translingual practices for dealing with difficult concepts*

The most selected reason for translinguaging according to the survey responses was for dealing with difficult concepts. Over half of the respondents (55%) mentioned that multiple

language use was more noticeable when difficult or complex concepts needed to be explained, or when there was difficulty understanding. The respondent explains more elaborately in the extract below.

Extract 5.2.1: “As an example, if in any class a difficult concept is being explained, and the English words used just makes everything more complex, then I think it is better for the lecturers to shift to French or any other language that the majority of students are comfortable with, then it will really facilitate learning.”

In Extract 5.2.1, the respondent elucidates that when difficult concepts are explained, and if English, being the medium of instruction, is found to cause a restriction or obscure understanding, shifting to a more comfortable language such as French (or any other language familiar to the students) can enhance their learning experience. This indicates that language flexibility can assist with comprehension and digesting complex or difficult concepts. The use of “shifting” in the student’s response alludes to the languaging practices that conceptualise translingual practices, where the notion of “language resources” refers to one unitary whole. This answer suggests that translanguaging aids with complex concepts, and that instructors are flexible for effective teaching. This aligns with the notion that language flexibility or fluid language practices is seen as an important pedagogical tool, especially in the context of higher education multilingual learning environments (Parra, 2024). Language flexibility and fluidity is recognised as a way to enhance the understanding of complex subject matters, illustrating that translanguaging strategies can improve learning experiences by helping students grasp concepts that are complex through leveraging their full linguistic repertoires (Garcia & Li Wei, 2014).

5.2.2 *Mother tongue as inclusive and supportive approach*

Participants associated the use of Kreol during translingual practices as deeply rooted in their Mauritian identity. A total of 22.5% of respondents were of the opinion that including mother tongue as an additive for learning made content more accessible for students. The following example highlights the value of mother-tongue support for French definitions that are difficult to comprehend. One participant described how it was necessary in some cases to use Kreol to explain French definitions.

Extract 5.2.2.a: “There are also some words in French whereby their definitions are sometimes confusing. Explaining these words to learners in their mother tongue language can be advantageous, in terms that it may help students to learn the language in course”.

This is an interesting finding, because both English and French are taught in primary schools and are the languages of instruction (Rajkomar & Gupta, 2008). However, French tends to be used far more for communicative purposes, including in educational settings. As a compulsory subject taught in schools, learners are ensured a foundational education in French (Auleear Owodally, 2012). In addition, French is considered a language of prestige and associated with educational advantages, which is similar to English being viewed as “better” in the previous chapter. This view is known to have an influence on language policies in Mauritius (Ihemere, 2025). French is also a language that is widely used in educational settings, including higher education (Florigny et al., 2023; Sonck, 2005).

Another participant conveyed the following as their response to the question about when multiple language use was present:

Extract 5.2.2.b: “To explain difficult concepts and to make jokes. It is so much easier when the lecturer make[s] use of our native language so that we can clearly understand things.”

In this response, the student states not only that multiple languages are used to explicate difficult concepts, but also that this is evident when jokes are made. The student emphasises that when their lecturer uses their native language, it makes difficult concepts “so much easier” to comprehend. This finding suggests that including Kreol fosters a more inclusive and supporting environment that enhances comprehension. According to Wigglesworth et al. (2013), using Creole actively in the classroom can lead to positive academic outcomes for students, which can also involve a better understanding of the material, better engagement, and improved cultural identity. These findings are consistent with this study, which found that incorporating Creole as a supporting language in higher education can offer significant benefits, including improved academic performance.

5.2.3 *Familiar languages for new terminologies*

A total of 15% of respondents stated that new concept or terminologies were better comprehended when they were instructed in languages that were more familiar. For example, when discussing the challenges of understanding new terminology, one student shared that they preferred the use of familiar languages for clarity.

Extract 5.2.3: “Some expressions or words might be difficult to understand if we have not been exposed to it before. Therefore, using languages in which we are more familiar to explain or might be useful to us.”

Here, the student explains that when new terminologies are being introduced, using languages that are familiar can be helpful, which implies that for multilinguals, multiple languages are more effective for making sense of new knowledge. Translingual practices are not only about language choice, but also about strategic choices that tap into the full linguistic potential of the individual. The use of familiar languages as a translingual strategy can be considered a tool for effective content learning and deeper digestion (Baker, 2011).

5.2.4 *Contextual examples*

A significant theme that appeared from the responses relate to the use of contextual examples as a pedagogical strategy in helping students to connect with the content on a deeper level. An important finding from the responses is the use of local examples from the Mauritian context as a way to localise content. Although a smaller percentage of participants (10%) indicated that examples in the Mauritian context were helpful due to their familiarity with it, it is still a relevant finding. Below, I provide two extracts as examples to demonstrate this theme.

Extract 5.2.4.a: “When giving everyday examples in our Mauritian context, the use of Kreol comes in handy. Using both French and Kreol really helps understand the concepts.”

Extract 5.2.4.b: “When explaining a new concept, the lecturer will firstly explain in French and if we are having difficulties to understand, he/she will explain and give examples

in Kreol but examples in the Mauritian context that will create a sense of ownership so that we better understand what it's all about.”

The students express that understanding concepts is easier when both French and Kreol are used. This reveals that a combination of Kreol and French assists in understanding concepts. The implication here is that students can gain from a pedagogical approach that links new concepts to experiences they can relate to. This pedagogical approach recognises the importance of situating their linguistic identities in the learning process. Highlighting French and Kreol as the preferred languages supports the idea that, when it comes to translanguaging, students are able to connect more deeply with the subject or content when it is presented in a language they embody. This approach enables accessibility to content and validates the students' identity. This finding supports the conclusions of Rao et al. (2023), who emphasise the importance of contextualisation as a key pedagogical strategy. The fact that 10% found the use of local examples helpful suggests that contextualisation does have a positive effect on their learning, even if it is not necessarily a common response.

5.3 Kreol identity

This section explores the role of translanguaging in supporting or enhancing students' cultural and linguistic identity. The students' responses here are in reply to a reflection question. They were asked to reflect on a question related to the eradication of Kreol as part of their translingual repertoire and practice. Two significant sub-themes arose from the data analysis. The respondents replied to this question with highly emotive answers. Through frequency analysis, I counted the emotive expressions and grouped them into three separate categories, namely negative, neutral, and positive. I categorised the feelings according to emotion. A total of 85% was considered highly emotive expressions, and to illustrate this, I identified the emotive expressions using their exact words. In total, 15% expressed with neutral terms that they would not be affected. Lastly, there was no positive response to the question.

Table 5.2: Emotional responses

Emotions	Emotive expressions	Frequency
Negative emotions	Angry, lost, sad, hurt, alienated, discriminated, horrible, bad/very bad, upset, uneasy, uncomfortable, bummed, left without identity, indignant	85%
Neutral	No problem, not much difference, would not have an impact, don't really mind, normal, not affected	15%
Positive	None	0%

The responses revealed a strong emotional attachment to Kreol, deeply rooted in the students' sense of identity and belonging. The eradication of Kreol was hypothetical, yet the emotional attachment expressed by the students indicated that Kreol was not merely a language for communicative purposes but a fundamental component of heritage and identity. To a high percentage of these students, their Mauritian Kreol identity represents a core constituent that cannot be eliminated even as a suggested idea. The significance of these findings has implications for language practice in Mauritius, where dominant languages such as English and French continue to hold greater stature and institutional value. Further to note is how students feel validated by their identity and ignoring or suppressing these linguistic resources would undermine their sense of self-worth. This is a strong case for educational policies that affirm and legitimise Kreol as a language of instruction, not only in primary education but also at higher levels, or at the very least recognise the fluid and dynamic use of multiple languages in higher education.

5.3.1 Unifying power of Kreol

Kreol is represented linguistically as a unifying power. Students expressed strong sentiments when faced with the question: "What would you do if Kreol was completely eradicated?"

Extract 5.3.1: "Something would be missing. Kreol is what unités [unites] Mauritian people. I dont [don't] think it could be eradicated. Even our french [French] or English has à[a] bit of [Kreol]".

This participant explains that even if Kreol were to be officially removed, it would not be eradicated completely in practice. The response demonstrates the perception that it would be impossible to remove Kreol completely, because elements of Kreol are embedded in both French and English. What is important to note in this particular response is the phrase “**our** French or Kreol”. The message it conveys is that Kreol is the embodiment of the Mauritian language, ethnicity, and culture. This finding exemplifies the heart and soul of what translanguageing embodies theoretically and practically. At its core, translanguageing collectively embraces linguistic resources and views them as one unitary enterprise, rethinking the ideologies of named languages (Wei & García, 2022).

This sub-theme reveals how translanguageing affects the students’ linguistic identity. A dominant theme from this question is the loss of identity that would accompany the loss of Kreol as a language. This speaks true to the situation on this island, and this is represented in the response from the participant. A clear example is provided by a participant who shared how linguistic resources were represented in the mindset of a multilingual in Extract 5.3.1.

For decades, Kreol as a language has struggled to attain the same level of recognition as English and French. In previous studies in the domains of language acquisition and sociolinguistics, Kreol is associated with the communicative learning processes at the different schooling stages (Auleear Owodally, 2012; Rajkomar & Gupta, 2008; Rajah-Carrim, 2007; Sonck, 2005), and even if Kreol is rejected by teachers who are insistent on instructing learners to rather speak in French or English, its prevalence remains ubiquitous. Mauritius is one of the few places in the world where a language that is the least spoken is the language of instruction. This feeds into the notion that Kreol is an innate composition of the Mauritian linguistic identity, and a crucial part of the Mauritian repertoire. As seen in the findings from the previous chapter and the previous section, and from other studies (Auckle & Barnes, 2011; Rajah-Carrim, 2007), instructors and students make use of translanguageing as an aid to enhance several aspects of the academic experience. Language and identity have co-existed in various multilingual contexts as interwoven agents that influence individuals’ language practices, and inadvertently their beliefs and perceptions.

5.3.2 *Kreol as identity and heritage*

The extract below represents a deep connection to Creole as a mother tongue. The speaker expresses a strong emotional attachment to Kreol, highlighting that it is not just a language, but an integral part of their identity. Here, the speaker directly relates Kreol to their cultural identity and ancestral heritage, emphasising that language is not merely a tool for communication, but also a living embodiment of history and culture. Creole is more than a language for the speaker; it is a symbol of belonging and a reminder of the island's collective past. The final statement underlines the idea of heritage.

Extract 5.3.2 Je me sentirais vraiment mal et blésée parce que c'est ma langue maternelle, la langue que j'utilise le plus souvent. Je me sentirais mal à l'aise de ne pas pouvoir m'exprimer en créole. Ce serait comme enlevé une partie de mon identité car je vis dans une île et la langue créole est notre langue ancestrale. Eradiquer la langue créole serait comme un manque de respect envers nos ancêtres esclaves. La langue créole reste un héritage de nos ancêtres esclaves pour notre pays et on devrait pouvoir la préserver. [I would feel really bad and hurt because it's my mother tongue, the language I use most often. I would feel uncomfortable not being able to express myself in creole. It would be like removing a part of my identity as I live on an island and creole is our ancestral language. Eradicating the creole language would be like a lack of respect towards our ancestral slaves. Creole remains the heritage of our country's ancestral slaves, and we should be able to preserve it.]

Djtié (2006) argues that language is inherently tied to identity, or that language itself is an identity, and that language cannot be detached from the people who speak it. The argument is that it is impossible to handle language without acknowledging its central relationship to the socio-cultural context altogether. Djtié (2006) views language as playing an important role in instituting one's place in society. A person's language, and their ways of speaking, are not just reflections of who they are, but also "make them who they are – more precisely, allow them to make themselves" (Llamas & Watt, 2010, p. 9). The participants' views on translanguaging

resonate with previous studies on how translanguaging fosters a sense of identity in multilingual learners (Almashour, 2024) and in postcolonial contexts (Guo & Han, 2024).

5.4 Summary

This chapter addressed two research inquiries: what are the students' perceptions of the efficacy of translanguaging as a learning tool in different disciplines at the selected institutions of higher education; and how does translanguaging enhance cultural and linguistic identity. Two aspects of translanguaging vis-à-vis cultural and linguistic identity were identified. Firstly, the students' perspectives leaned heavily towards translanguaging as a beneficial addition to their academic success. Secondly, the findings illustrate strong feelings in favour of Kreol as *the* marker of Mauritian identity.

In relation to questions about translanguaging being helpful with difficult concepts and as a learning tool, the majority responded positively. The results from these two inquiries provided some insight into the students' views of translanguaging as part of their educational journey.

Their open-ended responses revealed a number of reasons why translingual practices occur during lectures, indicating that these practices were introduced when concepts were difficult, new, or confusing. The responses contained many similar expressions that focused on themes such as flexible linguistic practices when dealing with difficult concepts, mother tongue as a supportive language promoting inclusivity, especially when new concepts or terminologies were being introduced, and lastly, drawing on the Mauritian context as familiar and comforting, especially when giving examples.

The results revealed the entirety of the Kreol identity as a prominent theme. This emerging theme provided a lot of depth, understanding, and valuable insight. This finding addressed the question of the extent to which translanguaging enhances students' linguistic and cultural identity in different disciplines. The overarching finding was that there was an inability to separate from Kreol as a language, and as an identity. The responses were emotively rich, with negative responses to the suggestion of Kreol's removal from their linguistic repertoire. The culminating finding is represented in one response, which states: "I don't think it could be eradicated. Even our French or English has a bit of Kreol". This is translanguaging explained in

the most genuine and authentic manner, iterative of the notion of Ubuntu translanguaging (I am because we are).

Chapter Six

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

The aim of this study was to explore how translanguaging is used as a pedagogical aid in the multilingual Creole context of the Mauritius higher education system. This chapter summarises the main findings of the study based on the research questions, data collected, and significance of the study. The chapter also makes recommendations based on the findings of the study, points out some limitations, and ends with a conclusion.

6.1 Summary of the study

The study addressed translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy in the multilingual Creole context of Mauritius. It also explored linguistic and cultural identity, and how this influenced translanguaging practices. In an underexplored context, the study aimed to provide valuable insight into the lived translanguaging experiences of students of higher learning. The study explored how translanguaging was used in different disciplines within this complex linguistic landscape, where languages are still being subjected to hierarchical power dynamics. It illustrated that students use translingual practices to make meaning and validate one another's understanding through support and collaborative scaffolding.

As an understudied area with rich linguistic encounters, the Mauritian context was viewed through the translanguaging lens in order to showcase the innovative and creative ways in which individuals can exploit their linguistic resources within the higher education sector to make meaningful connections. The research indicated that students perceive translanguaging as a way to measure their understanding of the subject matter. The ways in which students engage in (trans)languaging were found to be inherently bonded to their ethnolinguistic identity, situated in a deeply historical and cultural composition that is unique to the Mauritian context.

The study was framed within a mixed methods approach, focusing on investigating translanguaging as a learning tool in pedagogy. The research aimed to explore the role of translanguaging in different disciplines at selected institutions of higher education, and how it is used for deeper learning and epistemological access. The study also explored the students' perceptions of translanguaging, and its role in supporting or enhancing students' cultural and

linguistic identity. Data was collected via focus groups and a survey in order to gain a better understanding of translanguaging practices in this area. Through a process of frequency and thematic analyses, emerging themes were revealed.

6.2 Summary of research objectives

The research objectives and summary of their findings are explained in the following section.

6.2.1 *To explore the degree to which translanguaging is used as a learning tool in four disciplines at two institutions of higher learning in Mauritius*

In exploring how translanguaging is used as a tool for deeper learning, and for negotiating meaning in a multilingual Creole context, a significant finding of this study is represented in the students' use of their *Complex Interlingual Repertoire*. "Interlingual" here is specific to the use of their seamless translanguaging patterns as they navigate complex issues and make meaning of concepts. In addition, this finding illustrated several important aspects. Aside from the participants intrinsically applying their linguistic and semiotic resources in a complex and impressive manner to recall a concept that was considered challenging, they were in constant support of each other through a validation tactic that ensured they were on the same level of understanding.

Translanguaging is more than scaffolding (García & Wei, 2014); it is a semiotic agility that enables multilingual creativity (Kalan, 2022). This showed a supportive environment, where the same interpretation of a certain concept was expressed through *Interspeaker validation*. There was a core cohesion in their negotiation of meaning, which would suggest that when multilingual speakers deal with challenging encounters, they display elevated levels of mutual inter-comprehensibility. This is aligned to the idea that languages are not segregated into "linguistic boxes" (Makalela, 2015), but represent one flowing, fluid unit, so that languages complete other languages.

While the lecture room is considered a milieu with frequent and effective translingual encounters from both students and instructors, this is conducted primarily through spoken communication. It is in *small group spaces* that full expression and creativity are experienced.

An example of small group spaces is the students' tutorials, where they are able to use their full linguistic repertoire without any restrictions or limitations. This finding is situated aptly within the concept of "deeper digestion" in pedagogy, which is described as the process of strengthening profound and comprehensive understanding of subject matter, which essentially allows the student, through engagement, to elevate beyond surface-level learning and achieve higher-order thinking skills (Baker, 2011).

In small group spaces, students are able to engage with content more acutely because they have the use of all their language resources (in this case, the co-existence of the trilingual practice of English, French, and Kreol) without any rigid linguistic boundaries. The students report working as a team while brainstorming and planning for their presentation using a whiteboard. They report that languages during these sessions have no limits. These findings provide key insights into the effectiveness of translanguaging as a way to amplify access to knowledge and foster a deeper understanding of content. Even if the presentation at the end is required to be in English, the construction behind the scenes has undergone critical processing through translingual practices. The small group space is aligned to Li Wei's concept in translanguaging theory according to which the prospect of creativity and criticality are reinforced by "translanguaging spaces" (Li Wei, 2011).

Identity is intrinsically connected to language and the way it is used in different contexts. Within a rich multilingual, multicultural context, it was inevitable that feelings of identity would surface. In this study, Kreol was strongly affiliated to the Mauritian identity. This is not a new finding, as Kreol has been identified for years as *the* marker of Mauritian identity. The thought of no longer having Kreol as a language resulted in several emotive responses, revealing feelings of being lost, uncomfortable, discriminated against, and alienated, to name a few. This finding indicates a deep connection between language, identity, and heritage. A major finding in this study was underscored by translanguaging embracing linguistic resources and viewing them as a unitary whole. One of the crucial responses stated that "even our French or English has bit of Kreol".

6.2.2 *To investigate how translanguage is used as a tool for deeper learning and epistemological access in four disciplines at the two selected institutions*

In multilingual contexts, the prevalence of translanguage is evident, not just among students, but also from the instructors in all the disciplines, including the content-specific and language-focused subjects. *Instructor Support Through Translanguage* is a key finding when it comes to enhancing teaching and learning. In a context where English is the medium of instruction but spoken the least of the three languages, this finding illustrates that translanguage as a pedagogical practice fosters a supportive environment, enabling students to focus on content, which in turn leads to comprehension and student engagement in different disciplines (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022; Parra & Proctor, 2021, 2023).

6.2.3 *To explore students' perceptions of the efficacy of translanguage as a learning tool in four disciplines at the two selected institutions of higher learning*

The perceptions of the students on their translanguage experiences provide valuable insight into their views on the advantages of translanguage practices. The key findings from this inquiry emphasise the overarching idea that language fluidity and language affordances are paramount for accessing content and managing difficult concepts or terminologies. The perceived benefits of translingual use included the flexibility of translingual practices for dealing with difficult concepts. In addition, the mother tongue (in this case, Kreol) was viewed as providing an inclusive and supportive approach to grasp terms that were at times inaccessible. Particularly noteworthy was that French was linguistically challenging for the participants, even as a language that the participants speak regularly and with which they are known to be more comfortable. As additional support, instructors were also found to localise with examples related to the Mauritian context during lectures in order to make the content more accessible and comprehensible to students. The students expressed a level of comfort when instructors provided *Contextual examples for better understanding* to facilitate content. In Creole contexts, it is evident that the practice of localisation (Budin, 2006) supplements the translanguage agenda by improving both communication and the overall learning experience.

6.2.4 *To establish how translanguaging in four disciplines at selected Mauritian institutions of higher learning enhances students' cultural and linguistic identity*

As a postcolonial state, Mauritius has often been bound to the remnants of continued colonial language legacies in the more official governmental institutions. The aim of the study was not to investigate the power dynamics in this regard, but it became a recurring observation among students that could not be ignored.

This finding provides insights into the participants' internal composition of their perception of the languages. There is an internal hierarchy of languages, but this is reflected differently in practice. Their internal *historical programming* became more notable while reflecting on their formative years, when teachers were forceful about speaking only English or French. It became evident that they carried this internal perception even years later, because different groups from various disciplines expressed the perception that English was better. This illustrates how historical programming can shape and influence the current practices of learners. The use of Kreol has had negative undertones, especially in the education sector. This is evidenced not only by the fact that English is still the language of education, but also by the fact that the implementation of Kreol in the education system has been met with much resistance previously.

6.3 Recommendations for practice

The recommendations provided here are based on the results of this study. The finding that Kreol is intrinsically part of the students' linguistic and cultural identity betrays a measure of misalignment, since the idea that Kreol has an official role in education is still being rejected. A recommendation for practice calls for Kreol to be implemented in a more official manner to match the deep-rooted connection it carries as the identity marker of the Mauritian context. Although it was implemented in schools, it is still an optional selection for learners, despite being the most widely used language.

6.4 Recommendations for further research

6.4.1 *Classroom observations*

There are several limitations to this study that require future research. Firstly, this study used focus groups and a survey as data collection methods. The findings were based on the students' perspectives and recollections of past events. While these methods proved to be effective in addressing the research objectives, it is recommended that classroom observations be used as another collection tool to get more depth and valuable insight into translanguaging practices in action, or in real time. Classroom observations would be an effective instrument for this type of study, because it would allow the researcher direct access to the translanguaging practices as they occur. Classroom observations would be complementary to the methods of data collection used here.

6.4.2 *Instructor interviews*

Secondly, while the study found that instructors engaged in translingual practices to facilitate and support learning, this was again from the students' perspective. This is not to say that these findings were inaccurate, but interviewing the instructors to gain insight into their pedagogical strategies could provide a deeper understanding of their reasons for translanguaging and eventually implementing translanguaging strategies in a more official way.

6.4.3 *Pedagogical translanguaging*

This study illustrated that translanguaging in this context was a spontaneous occurrence and was used when the need arose. A recommendation to implement pedagogical translanguaging can involve planned use of multilingual resources. As an example, one may suggest using "small group spaces" to take the translanguaging agenda a step further. The context of small group spaces is regarded as a substantially optimal setting for translingual encounters, which has the potential to elevate teaching and learning for the student in a context where the medium of instruction is the least spoken language. This research offers insights into positive instructor attitudes for planned pedagogical engagements with students in Creole and other underrepresented contexts of complex multilingual encounters. To validate these findings, there is a need for further large-scale research on Creole multilingualism and the extent to which translanguaging is realised for epistemic access and identity positioning in higher education.

6.4.4 *Subject area or specific contexts*

Lastly, it is recommended that future research considers delving deeper via longitudinal research into focusing on specific disciplines or higher education contexts that could provide a deeper understanding of the Mauritian higher education context.

6.5 Conclusion

The study sought to investigate the prevalence of translanguaging and its advantages to identity affirmation and epistemic access in a Creole context of higher education. This study responded to a particular research niche, where the use of more than one language in classrooms in these contexts remained in its infancy to offer modelling for scaling up good multilingual practices.

Through intensive and reiterative recall sessions with university students, the findings of the study confirm translanguaging as a norm and display higher levels of interlingual complexity and meaning making processes that both mirror contemplation of discontinuation continuation in translanguaging. Cultural identities were observed and expressed translingually around the idea of “whole-ness” of multilingual speakers. Finally, these epistemic and identity affordances were enabled through lecturer attitudes to provide translanguaging spaces (such as small group spaces) as a practical way to engage meaningfully with multilingual students in complex situations, such as the Creole contexts.

Key to both points on identity and epistemic access discussed above are the translanguaging stances that instructors take (García & Li Wei, 2014). The lecturers in this study have shown to provide classroom affordances that enable the students to cope with the difficulties presented by English monolingual bias. Beyond the epistemic needs of multilingual students, the study has shown that translanguaging is a viable, useful strategy preferred by teachers to resolve incongruence between official policies and actual classroom needs of the students. This case has demonstrated that it offers epistemological pathways to knowing and the “space” where students can be creative and critical in translanguaging encounters. The higher education system in this Creole context has proven that it is able to provide spaces inside the classroom where translingual encounters are not only regular occurrences, but where deeper digestion and access to meaning are also sanctioned in creative ways. These practices inside the

classroom allow for affordances that enhance access to knowledge and specifically “meaning making” (Baker, 2011; García & Li Wei, 2014).

García and Li Wei (2014) have viewed translanguaging as an expression of fluid linguistic practices that traverse between and surpass ideologies grounded in socially constructed language and educational systems. Such practices empower and allow students to engage in multiple meaning-making systems. The study has yielded this view. The results of the study showed that the participants used their complex repertoires fluidly to transcend the boundaries of the socially named languages, such as English, French and Kreol. Their expressions were highly intelligible and systematically sound, in spite of being seemingly messy at surface level.

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Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance

Wits School of Education

27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Tel: +27 11 717-3064 Fax: +27 11 717-3100 E-mail: enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za Website: www.wits.ac.za

20 October 2017

Student Number: 1540609

Protocol Number: 2017ECE030D

Dear Melanie Lee Ah Soon

Application for Ethics Clearance: Doctor of Philosophy

Thank you very much for your ethics application. The Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the Senate, has considered your application for ethics clearance for your proposal entitled:

Translanguaging as a pedagogical aid in Mauritius Higher Education System

The committee recently met, and I am pleased to inform you that **clearance was granted**.

Please use the above protocol number in all correspondence to the relevant research parties (schools, parents, learners etc.) and include it in your research report or project on the title page.

The Protocol Number above should be submitted to the Graduate Studies in Education Committee upon submission of your final research report.

All the best with your research project. Yours sincerely,

MM

Wits School of Education

011 717-3416

cc Supervisor - Prof Leketi Makalela

Appendix 2: Consent Form

LEARNER CONSENT FORM

Researcher: **Melanie Lee Ah Soon**

Protocol number: **2017ECE030D**

Please fill in the reply slip below if you agree to participate in my study.

Permission to undergo interviews

I agree to being interviewed

YES	NO
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Informed Consent

I understand that:

- My participation in this research is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation in this research at any time.
- My participation in this research has no bearing on my academic performance.
- Any information derived from the research that personally identifies me will not be released or disclosed.
- All data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.
- My signature means that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature: _____ Date _____

Participant's name: _____
