

# Chapter 1

## Perspectives of Translanguaging in Afrikaans First Additional Language and South African Classrooms: Code–Switching Practice Perspectives in Education

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study focuses on the perceived act of alternating between languages in a context in which even the monolingual and -glossic use of language alternation still proves to be problematic. Due to (i) the discrepancy between theory and practice regarding the use of Code-switching (CS), (ii) the dearth of CS research in Afrikaans First Additional Language education and the geographical area, Pretoria, (iii) the possible negative perceptions already outlined in other research with regards to CS as a teaching approach and strategy and (iv) the multicultural and multilingual backgrounds of learners intermingled in a single classroom, this chapter aims to provide an critical engagement with the linguistic diversity of learners and teach-*

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*ers in the South African education system in terms of translanguaging practices in classrooms and assessments. New data applicable to the Global South, from an understudied language combination of Afrikaans-English for CS and pedagogical translanguaging is explored in a multi-cultural and multilingual setting.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

South Africa remains known as a multilingual and multicultural country where twelve languages are officially accepted as national languages. Despite this linguistic diversity, the country has experienced differing policies and viewpoints on the use of language in education over the last 80 years<sup>1</sup>. During this period linguistic diversity, as can be reflected in perspectives on the use of translanguaging and subsequent and incorporated code-switching practices<sup>2</sup>, has not always been at the forefront of building successful and inclusive instruction. Research by Alexander and Heugh (1999), Heugh (2003), Makoni (2003), Makoni and Pennycook, (2012), Plüddemann (2013), Probyn (2009), and Stroud and Heugh (2011), and Heugh (2013) indicate that there is a disconnection between how languaging<sup>3</sup> is portrayed in constitutional-, governmental- and education policies (with a focus on monolingualism and segregationist views, bilingualism and assimilationist views towards English, and multilingualism and integrationist views), and the actual multilingual experiences of learners in schools in South Africa. Heugh (2013) outlines that although the principle of additive multilingual education is reflected in de jure policies it has not been implemented as such in the de facto reality. This disjunction is also reflected in significant research in sub-Saharan Africa which underscores the extended leverage of the first language as medium of instruction as well as the subsequent teaching of an additional and international language or lingua franca such as English (see Heugh, 2013 for a detailed exposition).

The historical view of language instruction in education has been influenced by both political attentions and pedagogical concerns. According to Zano (2024) during the apartheid era, language-in-education policies in South Africa were designed to implement a divide-and-rule strategy, mandating that each ethnic class receive instruction in its own language, reflecting a monolingual teaching approach. However, the post-1994 period saw a significant transformation as South Africa re-envisioned itself from an ethnically segregated society to a diverse but unified, multilingual non-racial and non-ethnically orientated nation. Given this context, the influence of not only language diversity but also cultural diversity plays an important role in the development and implementation of education policies and reforms, which purposefully remain an important matter for all key role players in South African society and this study.

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