Barriers to teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms in mainstream secondary schools

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore barriers to cultural and linguistic diversity teaching in mainstream secondary schools in South Africa.

Design/methodology/approach – The study was underpinned by the culturally responsive pedagogy theory as a framework. Face-to-face interviews were conducted to explore the barriers to teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) classrooms.

Findings – The authors found that teachers experience a plethora of challenges in teaching CLD learners. The findings show that culturally responsive practices, collaboration with relevant stakeholders and seeking professional development opportunities may advance the productive engagement of CLD learners in secondary schools.

Practical implications – Pre-service and in-service teachers should be conscientious about CLD teaching and learning through professional development. Teachers should be trained and retrained to accommodate CLD learners.

Originality/value – This study highlights significant aspects that hinder the inclusion of CLD learners and encourages the Department of Higher Education (tertiary institutions) and the Department of Basic Education Curriculum Developers to reconsider aspects of CLD in curriculum planning.

Keywords Barriers, Cultural diversity, Culturally responsive, Linguistic diversity, Professional development

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

> We are not simply bearers of cultures, languages, and histories, with a duty to reproduce them. We are products of linguistic and cultural circumstances, actors with the capacity to resynthesise what we have been socialised into [...] We are both socially determined and creators of human futures [...] (Kalantzis *et al.*, 1989).

The inclusion of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners has become a global trend because of immigration, multiculturalism and globalisation. Gay (2010) argues that culture is essential to how learning takes place, implying that cultural and linguistic diversity acknowledges the diverse learner backgrounds. Du Plessis (2019) defines diversity as the ability and sensitivity to realise, acknowledge and respect learner differences encompassing terms of their ethnic, racial, traditional, cognitive, economic and family cultures. This sensitivity extends to a recognition of a broad range of different learning styles. Teachers' ability to recognise this diversity is of paramount importance. According to Banks (2015), culture is the ever-changing values, social and political relationships, traditions and worldviews that are created, shared and transformed by a group of people who have a common language, history, social class and religion. Globally, most teenagers spend their lives in schools sharing and performing their cultures. Their learning extends lived experiences, deepens critical thinking and sharpens leadership skills (San Htay and Hadiyanto, 2022). These learning curves suggest that teachers should take cognisance of classroom diversity by adjusting their teaching methods and strategies to remove barriers to educational opportunities. Culture is indisputably connected to language and learning; hence teachers must appreciate diversity in their classrooms, consequently accommodating both cultural and linguistic diversity (Banks, 2015). In the same breath, schools are also encouraged to teach all learners to understand, adapt and respect diverse cultures and avoid conflicts among CLD learners (San Htay and Hadiyanto, 2022). This implies that teachers in mainstream inclusive classrooms should exhibit competencies to affirm the cultures and languages of diverse learners as valuable resources during teaching and learning.

South Africa is no exception to the CLD in mainstream secondary schools. South Africa is multi-linguistic and culturally diverse nation, with 11 official languages (Makalela, 2016). It recorded a total number of 4 million international immigrants in 2017 (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2017), suggesting that the influx of foreign nationals has added to in the complexity of CLD in mainstream classrooms. As a result of the huge number of CLD learners in South African classrooms, teachers are obliged to teach these CLD learners.

Like other countries with such complexities, South Africa passed several policies and legislation in 1994. These policies followed the domestication of international human rights instruments focused on inclusive education. Such policies include the Education White Paper 6 (EWP6) (2001). The EWP6 acknowledges and respects differences in learners, whether due to age, ethnicity, language, or disability (DoE, 2001). South Africa also passed the 1996 Bill of Rights which recognises the language rights of individuals. The Constitution of the Republic states that:

> Everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice, […] persons belonging to a cultural, religious, or linguistic community may not be denied the right, […] to enjoy their culture, practise their religion and use their language.

Furthermore, numerous language bodies such as the National Language Policy Framework (DAC, 2003) and the Language in Education Policy (Posel and Zeller, 2016) were adopted after 1994 to promote the Bantu languages. The Language Policy of South Africa acknowledges eleven (11) languages which include English, Afrikaans and the other 9 Bantu languages (Posel and Zeller, 2016). These policies and legislations are in line with goal 4, target 7 of the Sustainable Development Goals which stipulates that education should aim at promoting cultural diversity (UNESCO, 2017). However, the South African government has conferred the choice of language policy onto school governing bodies that prefer English as the only language of teaching and learning in schools (Ntshangase and Bosch, 2020). While diversity brings opportunities for teaching and learning, most teachers are confronted with CLD learners in their

mainstream classrooms. As they navigate the terrain to create equitable and inclusive learning environments, the self-same teachers encounter mammoth challenges. Thus, this study sought to explore the challenges faced by teachers in the inclusion of CLD learners to foster culturally responsive and effective learning environments for learners in mainstream classrooms.

Problem statement

The increasing numbers of CLD in South African classrooms pose challenges to teachers who are expected to create culturally responsive classrooms to accommodate the diverse needs of these learners. Despite the international legal frameworks on accommodating diversity in classrooms (UNESCO, 2017), there is a cultural and linguistic disconnection between teachers and learners as teachers fail to meet the CLD demands. The challenges of cultural and linguistic diversity are exacerbated because these teachers' backgrounds are different from their learners', and they have not been trained to teach in CLD classrooms (Cooc and Kim, 2021). According to Dursun *et al.* (2023), researchers have not explored the development of cultural and linguistic diversity knowledge during pre-service training, hence little is known about what teachers should know about CLD. This paucity in studies spurred the current study to explore challenges faced by teachers in responding to CLD in mainstream secondary schools in South Africa.

Inclusion of culturally and linguistically diverse learners

In consort with other international legal frameworks, states have an obligation to guarantee access and acceptance of CLD learners in mainstream schools. Such legal frameworks include the Elimination of ALL Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1965 (UNESCO United Nations, 2006), the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education in 1994 (UNESCO, 1994) and the Education for Sustainable Development Goals (UNESCO, 2017). Consequently, countries have become more linguistically diverse, complicating the cultural, linguistic and communication diversity in schools. For example, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) statistics demonstrate that immigrant learners in OECD countries increased in number from 2003 to 2015 (OECD, 2019). In addition, South Korea received 1.7 million foreigners, which resulted in increased CLD in mainstream classrooms (Kim and So, 2018). Furthermore, in the South-Western Sydney region of Australia, a total of 66.7% of all learners come from diverse backgrounds, other than English (Moloney and Saltmarsh, 2016). As a result, teachers are confronted with CLD learners in their classrooms. However, very few studies have examined the inclusion of CLD learners in mainstream secondary schools in South Africa. Premised on the sparse research studies on inclusion of CLD learners in mainstream secondary schools, this study explored the barriers to teaching in CLD classrooms in mainstream secondary schools Province in South Africa.

Challenges facing teachers in responding to cultural and linguistic diversity

Cultural and linguistic diversity is a global phenomenon, and teachers are often overwhelmed by the diversity of their learner population (Schachner, Noak, VA de Vijver and Eckstein, 2016). International studies show that teachers experience a plethora of challenges in the inclusion of CLD learners. For example, in Australian schools, teachers are confronted with little if any development in planning the inclusive CLD curriculum which has resulted in feelings of isolation and alienation among teachers (Miller, 2011). Australian teachers also experience cultural, language and communication barriers when teaching CLD learners (Verdon, 2018). In addition, these Australian teachers also confirmed that they do not have the necessary content and pedagogical content knowledge to effectively manage the

complexities in diverse learning and teaching environments (Du Plessis, 2019). Likewise, in the European Union community, CLD teachers lack relevant training to deal with CLD learners. They also lack the resources and time to adapt teaching methods suitable for CLD classrooms (Fine-Davis and Faas, 2014).

Likewise, teachers in the U.S. are confronted with complex CLD challenges which include a shortage of resources and textbooks to teach these CLD learners (Khong and Saito, 2014). Similarly, in India, teachers are not equipped with the requisite skills and abilities to teach in CLD classrooms (Pandey, 2011). According to Gorski and Parekh (2020), teacher educators experience challenges of critical orientations which results in them skirting the critical multicultural perspectives in teacher education courses. As a result, pre-service teachers' competencies in CLD classrooms are negatively affected. This corroborates Acquah et al. (2016) who argue that in Finland, teachers struggle to teach CLD learners since they have not received training for CLD classrooms. Mavuru and Ramnarain (2020) also confirm that teachers experienced some challenges when using culturally responsive pedagogy in their science classrooms since they have limited vocabulary for scientific concepts. These results confirm those of Banks (2015) who found that Science and Mathematics teachers believed that culturally responsive teaching may be suitable for other subjects, but not Mathematics and Sciences.

Teachers continue to experience language and communication barriers since they have limited proficiency in the range of languages. For instance, Kenyan teachers experience challenges in CLD classrooms since they are deployed in CLD schools regardless of their capability to teach in the CLD language (Nyaga and Anthonissen, 2012). Likewise, teachers in Botswana experience challenges in teaching Khoisan learners in their classrooms (Mulimbi and Dryden-Peterson, 2018). In Nigeria, even after the Nigerian Education Department put in place computer-assisted applications for translating English into different home languages, not all teachers are proficient in using technology to translate from English to the languages of their classrooms (Okebukola et al., 2013). This culminates in teachers struggling to ensure effective communication and engagement with CLD learners.

On the other hand, teachers in Namibian schools are also confronted with learners who abuse and discriminate against marginalised minority language learners (Matengu, Likando and Haihambo, 2019). This further complicates the reality that Namibian teachers lack sufficient training to teach in local languages (Chavez, 2016). In Zimbabwe, teachers do not have practical knowledge of dealing with CLD learners since issues of multilingualism and multiculturalism are not prioritised in teacher training (Chikasha, 2021).

In some South African schools, pedagogical practices do not accommodate cultural and linguistic diversity as espoused by the Constitution of South Africa (Ntshangase and Bosch, 2020). Similarly, in South Africa's higher education, English is used as a lingua franca in intercultural and academic communication (Bhatt, Khawla and Madiba, 2022) and this exerts an impact on the student educators who are required to adopt multicultural and multilingual values in diverse classrooms. In their study, Simmonds and Ajani (2022) found that the South African education system must be contextualised to meet the needs of diverse students. Equally, in-service teachers need to be retrained to design an inclusive curriculum that is reflective of all cultures. Simmonds and Ajani (2022) also suggest that the inclusion of all cultures in curriculum development would enhance teacher educators' appreciation of their indigenous environment.

Theoretical framework: culturally responsive pedagogy
The study is underpinned by culturally responsive pedagogy. Ladson-Billings (1995) views culturally responsive pedagogy as a learner-centered approach to teaching that considers the

importance of the learner's cultural background and experiences in all aspects of teaching and learning (Ladson-Billings, 1995). In addition, Villegas and Lucas (2007) contend that culturally responsive pedagogy is aimed at promoting learner engagement and achievement of all learners by embracing their diversity. This pedagogic approach facilitates identifying and nurturing learners' cultural strengths (Villegas and Lucas, 2007). As a mindset, culturally responsive pedagogy respects and recognises learners' histories, cultures and experiences and teachers are advised to find ways of including CLD learners in their pedagogies (Nieto, 2014). Teachers may therefore incorporate culturally and linguistically relevant instructional approaches to reflect the learners' lived experiences. Samuels (2018) argues that a culturally responsive pedagogy is characterised by teachers who are committed to cultural competence and who position themselves as both facilitators and learners. This suggests that teachers should be trained to be culturally and linguistically competent.

According to Banks (2015), a culturally responsive pedagogy focuses on content integration, the knowledge of construction processes, prejudice reduction, an empowering school culture, social construction and an equity-driven pedagogy. Dee and Peener (2017) argue that integrating learners' cultural and linguistic resources during teaching and learning would positively impact learning in CLD classrooms. Incorporating culturally and linguistically relevant teaching methods may help teachers create inclusive supportive environments.

The key to culturally responsive pedagogy is helping learners relate lesson content to their cultural backgrounds (Wlodkowski and Ginsberg, 1995). Thus, to enhance learners' active participation, teachers should tap into the learners' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This may pose challenges in the South African context where there is a myriad of diversity ranging from the 12 official languages that are recognised in South Africa to the diverse languages from immigrant learners accommodated in the inclusive mainstream classrooms.

Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) discuss the four conditions necessary for culturally responsive teaching: establishing inclusion, developing a positive attitude, enhancing meaning and engendering competence. If teachers have sufficient knowledge of culturally responsive teaching, they can be conscientious when teaching in CLD classrooms.

Research methodology

The study sought to explore the challenges confronting teachers in the inclusion of CLD learners in mainstream secondary schools in Gauteng. A qualitative approach that deals with participants' behaviour, written and spoken words (Taylor *et al.*, 2015) was employed to explore these challenges experienced in the inclusion of CLD learners. An interpretive paradigm (Thanh and Thanh, 2015) was used to interrogate the challenges faced by teachers in the inclusion of CLD learners in mainstream secondary schools. From the interpretive paradigm, teachers were viewed as social actors whose varied backgrounds and experiences contributed to the ongoing construction of the reality that exists in their broader context through social interaction (Burnette and Lingam, 2012). The researcher used purposeful sampling to select 12 secondary school teachers from 3 mainstream secondary schools in Gauteng Province. A critical case sampling method was applied to select the teachers who had knowledge that had the greatest impact. The 12 (12) teachers were selected because of their profound experiences (Silverman, 2016) on barriers to teaching in CLD classrooms in mainstream secondary schools.

The participants' teaching experience ranged from 5 to 20 years. They spoke different home languages including Setswana, isiZulu, chiShona, isiXhosa, xiTsonga, sePedi and Ngie. The participants were sampled from different subject groups ranging from Maths Literacy, Physical Science, Mathematics, Business Studies, English First Additional

Language, Life Orientation, Creative Arts, Accounting and History. The researcher used face-to-face interviews to elicit the participants' challenges in responding to cultural and linguistic diversity (Coughlan *et al.*, 2013). The researcher sought permission to tape-record the participants' responses. The recorded interviews were transcribed and thematically analysed. According to Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012) during thematic data analysis, themes identified from text data are credible and they demonstrate trends and patterns. During thematic data analysis, the following steps were followed, data transcription, data organisation, data segmentation, data coding and identifying the underlying themes (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010; Yin, 2016). The themes that emerged from the coded data showed that teachers experienced significant challenges in the inclusion of CLD learners. These emergent themes are discussed in the findings section.

Ethical considerations
This study received ethical clearance from the University of South Africa Institutional Review Board (2017/10/18/50838083/19/MC) and the Gauteng Department of Education gave permission to conduct research in schools. The researcher explained the nature of the study to the principals, the school governing bodies and the teachers, reiterating that the participants' rights to anonymity would be respected. The participating teachers signed consent forms before the interview process, and they were informed that they could withdraw anytime from the research study. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured by assigning pseudonyms to the participants.

Findings
The aim of this study was to explore the barriers to teaching in CLD classrooms in mainstream secondary schools. The data generated were thematically presented and corroborated by relevant literature. The themes that emerged during data analysis include lack of knowledge about cultural and linguistic diversity, lack of institutional support, language barriers and communication challenges, lack of parental involvement and challenges of ethnically driven learner relationships.

Lack of knowledge about cultural and linguistic diversity
The teaching of CLD learners requires teachers to understand the values that learners bring into the classrooms. Teachers must have knowledge of CLD learners so they can effectively support them. Banks (2015) and Gay (2010) argue that effectiveness of teaching in a CLD classroom significantly relies on the teachers' knowledge to promote meaningful learning for all learners. However, it emerged from the findings of this study that many teachers have inadequate knowledge to teach in CLD classrooms. For example, participants shared the following sentiments:

> We were trained before the advent of democracy, you know, the education we got was Eurocentric. No ethnicity was considered, no inclusivity was included in our studies. (Senzeni)

From Senzeni's response it can be deduced that some teachers lack confidence in themselves teaching in a CLD class. It further suggests that the teacher education curriculum disregarded the diverse nature of learner needs in the classroom as pre-service teachers did not receive training of CLD. This implies that CLD learners do not receive adequate support from the teachers because of lack of knowledge about CLD, and this may exert an impact on their academic performance.

In addition, Legae submitted:

> I was just trained to be a teacher, but I was not trained on inclusive education. I was only trained to teach English. I was never told you are going to meet learners from various cultures and languages. Mind you, this was Bantu education. I was only trained to teach English.

Although Legae shared the same sentiments with Senzeni, he added that he does not have knowledge about teaching in CLD classrooms as he lacked training about it. Lack of proper training appears to be the reason for teachers not incorporating CLD approaches in the teaching and learning processes. The other participant expressed that he had no knowledge of CLD since the teacher educators themselves had no idea of the diverse nature of the South African population. Sibiya had this to say:

> Actually, most lecturers were from a specific cultural background, you know? It was predominantly white. It was so difficult. The other lecturer was of an Indian origin. […] I had to cope with that. (Tshepi)

Tshepi blamed teacher education training for his lack of knowledge to teach in inclusive classrooms as evidenced by the following phrases: "*most lecturers were from a specific cultural background,*" "*It was difficult.*" This may suggest that the teacher education curriculum was not inclusive. Realising the gap in training, schools are left with the sole responsibility of providing in-service training to staff members so they can understand and embrace different languages and cultures in their teaching. The other challenge was the minimal support that schools provide to the teachers.

Lack of institutional support

It is acknowledged in the previous theme that some participants experienced challenges in including CLD learners as they lacked knowledge about cultural and linguistic diversity. It also emerged that there is lack of institutional support in implementing government policies such as the Education White Paper 6, Special Needs, Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001). The participants explained that the government policies are merely filed, and no one refers to these policies within the context of the diverse classrooms. For example, Nosipho alluded that;

> So, at my school […] we have never ever had a meeting where we dealt with white paper six. I think the policy is in the files […] Yeah, as I say the school does not give much of support. We have never even discussed cultural and linguistic diversity […] We seldom speak about that. The District and the Department of Education are not proactive. (Nosipho)

From Nosipho's response, it can be concluded that she is deeply concerned about the lack of support from the management who are supposed to provide continuous professional development training on inclusive education policies and ways of properly implementing them.

The other participants complained about the lack of support from the management, indicating that they do not know how to handle CLD learners. Bongani illuminated this point:

> The school does not give much support […] You just apply what's immediate to you. I have larges classes, […] they are not doing anything about it. I cannot even think of cultural and linguistic diversity. I have to follow the ATP and finish the syllabus. (Bongani)

The participants' lack of support is highlighted in the following phrases: "I have large classes" […] "not doing anything about it." For this participant, large classes affect teaching and learning since participants get overwhelmed by the large numbers of CLD learners. This

may mean that teachers cannot accommodate CLD learners for individualised lesson plans. The lack of institutional support results in the teachers' lack of competence in dealing with CLD learners. This lack of support contradicts the culturally responsive pedagogy which encourages teachers to tap into the knowledge and background of learners to enhance teaching and learning in CLD classrooms (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Samuels, 2018; Villegas and Lucas, 2007). The subsequent section addresses the language and communication barriers in CLD classrooms.

Language barriers and communication challenges
The language of communication used in schools determines the success of accommodating CLD learners (Dee and Peener, 2017; Matengu *et al.*, 2019; Okebukola *et al.*, 2013). However, in most South African schools, teachers are restricted to using English only in the classrooms. Other teachers are not conversant with the language that is used by certain CLD learners. The following quotes demonstrate participants' inability to incorporate ethnic diversity in instruction:

> I am Xhosa. In class, I have Xhosa, Zulu, Tswana and foreign learners from Botswana and Zimbabwe, and it is a problem. I code-switch and would want to give a cultural example, but I have a challenge with certain languages that we have in the classroom. (Ayanda)

The above vignette expresses how teachers struggle to ensure effective communication, comprehension and participation in CLD classrooms. This is evidenced by the following phrases: *"It is a problem to code-switch […] I have challenges with certain languages […]"* This suggests that teachers face challenges adapting their teaching strategies to promote language development while delivering content knowledge. The language barrier and communication challenges resonate with Pandey (2011) who found that teachers lack the necessary skills, abilities and attitudes to use culture-specific contexts such as language in CLD classrooms. However, the lack of such skills contradicts the culturally responsive pedagogy approach that advocates integration of learners' cultural and linguistic resources in the classrooms (Dee and Peener, 2017). Language and communication barrier impedes the learners' cognition. The next section discusses the lack of parental involvement in the teaching and learning processes.

Lack of parental involvement
The findings suggest parental involvement as critical in ensuring meaningful teaching and learning in diverse classrooms. Therefore, we argue that schools should allow parents to contribute to the teaching and learning of their children. In this understanding, some participants bemoaned the lack of parental involvement in their children's education as evidenced in the following verbal quotation:

> Parents leave them alone and then they stay behind. Parents go back to Mozambique and leave their children alone. They brought them here to learn and then they leave them. Those learners don't get parental support. When you call parents meeting, they do not come because they are not there. (Mandla)

Mandla's response shows that some parents are absent in their children's lives and education as he mentions: "*Parents go back to Mozambique and leave their children alone […] when you call parents' meetings, they do not come […]*" This may imply that parents are not involved in their children's education as leaving these children behind results in child headed families. Children who are left to look after themselves struggle to cope with the demands of new content. This absence of parents in the education of their children has a negative effect

on the child's progress. The lack of parental involvement may hinder effective communication between the school and the home. Nyameko also adds that some parents do not understand any of the 11 official languages and it is a challenge to explain some concepts to them as mentioned in the vignette below:

> Then from the ones from Mozambique, mostly their parents they don't speak the South African home languages so there's no one helping the learner at home, there is no continuity. (Nyameko)

From the above quotation, it can be discerned that language barriers encountered with foreign national parents affects teaching and learning as there is no link between the home and school. Lack of parental involvement may also affect community collaboration. It also deters learner achievement since there is no continual support when the learners get home. The section below discusses the challenges of ethnically driven learner relationships.

Challenges of ethnically driven learner relationships
It is highly possible that learners from the same cultural group may associate with each other and look down upon other learners. This may create cliques in the classrooms where learners from the same cultural and language groups refrain from associating with the others. Having such groups in the classrooms my cause some learners to feel lonely and isolated. This happens especially where minority groups are marginalised (Matengu *et al.,* 2019; Mulimbi and Dryden-Peterson, 2018). Some participants complained about learners from the dominant cultural group who frown upon minority cultural and language groups. The minority groups felt intimidated to participate during classroom instruction as confirmed by the statements below:

> You find the Venda learners, they'll always be together, even when they sit in the class. You find Venda sitting with Venda. Venda is the marginalised group. You find the Tswana sitting with Tswana. […] and Tsonga […] and these ethnic groups always fight against each other […] The other cultural group looks down upon the other […] it affects the minority learner. (Maboreke)

Maboreke emphasised that ethnically driven relationships are a huge challenge in CLD classrooms as evidenced in these phrases; *"[…] Venda sitting with Venda, […] these ethnic groups always fight against each other […] cultural group looks down upon the other."* This may suggest that the learners do not respect each other's ethnic groups, and the lack of respect negatively affects teaching and learning as teachers are confronted with learners reluctant to collaborate and share their histories. They may also influence the self-esteem of the minority learners as they would not actively participate during classroom instruction. The effects of these ethnically driven relationships concur with previous literature that underscores that learners from minority groups were abused, discriminated against and marginalised by other learners (Matengu *et al.,* 2019). However, these results contradict those of San Htay and Hadiyanto (2022) who confirm that teenagers spend their lives in schools sharing and enacting their cultures and lived experiences. The following section interrogates and evaluates the findings presented above.

Discussion of findings
The findings of this study demonstrate the challenges that teachers experience to effectively include CLD learners. The findings suggest that for learners to effectively thrive in CLD classrooms, they should be allowed to enact their language and cultures with the support of their teachers. The findings resonate with Dee and Peener (2017), Matengu *et al.* (2019), Okebukola *et al.* (2013), San Htay and Hadiyanto (2022) who established that learners spent most of their time expressing their lived-experiences and enacting their cultures. However,

because of their lack of knowledge, teachers are not able support the CLD learners. These findings contradict with the inclusive pedagogy approach that advocates for teachers' commitment and knowledge to teach in diverse classrooms (Samuels, 2018). It is argued in this study that institutions of higher learning should incorporate inclusive strategies which promote CLD in the training of teachers. This would enhance meaningful and effective teaching and learning in the classroom.

The findings of the study further established that teachers need to be workshopped to help them close the gap regarding the cultural and linguistic strategies in their teaching and learning. This is supported by Chavez (2016), Chikasha (2021) and Dursun *et al.* (2023) who established that teachers do not possess enough practical knowledge because of insufficient per-service and in-service training in teaching CLD classrooms. However, Banks (2015) found that not all teachers should possess knowledge about CLD since it is not considered in other subjects such as Mathematics and Sciences. This contradicts the demands of the Sustainable Development Goal 4, target 7 which advocates for the promotion of cultural diversity (UNESCO, 2017), as learners can learn better if the content is linked to their own language and culture. Thus, teachers should integrate CLD in the teaching of all subjects as this improves learners' cognition. It can be argued that each subject should be taught from one's culture.

It was also established that teachers struggle to support CLD learners in classrooms because of ethnically driven relationships among the learners themselves. These relationships affect collaboration between learners of different ethnic groups which perpetrates continuous segregation of learners from minority languages and cultures (Matengu *et al.*, 2019). It can be deduced that these ethnically driven relationships affect the cross-pollination of cultures within the classroom hence affecting the teaching and learning process. Therefore, teachers should strive to mitigate the ethnically driven relationships in the classrooms by teaching their learners an ethics of care which is embedded in the Ubuntu philosophy.

For culture to be embedded in the teaching and learning processes, parents are encouraged to actively participate in the education of their children (Rattenborg *et al.*, 2019). These parents are experts in their culture so their involvement will close the cultural and linguistic gap which exists among teachers and learners resulting sustainable education.

Conclusion
The study focused on the barriers to cultural and linguistic diversity teaching in mainstream secondary schools in Gauteng, South Africa. The barriers faced by teachers in responding to cultural and linguistic diversity are multifaceted and require careful consideration. The major conclusion in this study is that meaningful and sustainable learning in South African secondary schools (particularly within Gauteng schools) is dependent upon adequate knowledge and proper use of CLD teaching and learning strategies. The use of culturally responsive pedagogy as a theoretical framework allowed the researchers to realise the importance of incorporating learners' cultural and linguistic resources to enhance teaching and learning in CLD classrooms. By recognising and actively addressing these challenges, teachers can create classrooms that celebrate diversity, promote educational equity and support the success of all students, regardless of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. It is recommended that more research could focus on the instructional strategies that should be used in CLD classrooms. However, the findings of current study should not be generalised since the study was limited to mainstream secondary schools in Gauteng Province.

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