

INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY AND TRILINGUAL STRATEGIES IN GRADE 10 DRAMATIC ARTS EDUCATION

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Abstract

Technology and trilingualism play critical roles in the education of drama arts learners. The qualitative case study investigated the integration of technology and trilingual strategies within Grade 10 Dramatic Arts education at a single secondary school. A purposive sample of 25 participants, comprising both learners and educators, was selected to provide rich, context-specific insights into the implementation of the pedagogical approaches. The study was underpinned by Karpman's Drama Triangle, which explains the interpersonal dynamics of the victim, persecutor, and rescuer roles observed in classroom interactions and in learner engagement during dramatic arts activities. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which enabled participants to articulate their experiences and perceptions of the use of digital technologies and trilingual instructional methods. Thematic analysis was utilised to systematically identify patterns and salient themes emerging from the qualitative data. Findings indicated that the incorporation of technology enhanced learner engagement and accessibility, while the trilingual approach promoted cultural inclusivity and linguistic development. Nonetheless, challenges related to role conflicts and communication tensions, as conceptualised by Karpman's framework, were evident, underlining the necessity for targeted pedagogical support. The study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on multilingual and technology-mediated dramatic arts education, recommending professional development for educators to optimize role management and maximize educational outcomes in similarly diverse and digitally enriched learning environments.

Keywords: *Culture, dramatic arts, technology integration, trilingual education, pedagogy.*

1. Introduction

Dramatic Arts education in secondary schools plays a crucial role in nurturing creativity, communication skills, and cultural awareness among learners (Bayode, 2023). In multicultural and multilingual societies, such as South Africa, the linguistic diversity of classrooms necessitates pedagogical methods that embrace multiple languages to facilitate understanding and affirm identity (Liu, Suboh, & Alizadeh, 2024). Concurrently, the rapid expansion of digital technologies offers novel opportunities to enrich educational experiences through interactive, multimodal engagement with dramatic arts (Hu & Shu, 2025). Integrating technology and trilingual educational strategies in Grade 10 Dramatic Arts might present both opportunities and challenges. The dynamic nature of dramatic arts lends itself well to technology-assisted learning, such as multimedia presentations, digital platform rehearsals, and digital storytelling (Bayode, 2023). Meanwhile, employing learners' home language (isiXhosa, isiZulu) alongside English and a second official South African language could support a more profound comprehension, cultural relevance, and linguistic flexibility (Mtshali & Mashiya, 2022).

The study aims to investigate how these dual pedagogical approaches are enacted within a single secondary school, examining the impact on learner engagement, communication, and performance in dramatic arts. It also considers the social dynamics underpinning classroom interactions using Karpman's Drama Triangle theoretical framework, which focuses on the roles of victim, persecutor, and rescuer in communication patterns. The framework allows more profound insight into relational tensions and support mechanisms observable in multilingual, technology-mediated dramatic arts classrooms.

The study was set to answer these research questions:

1. How do technology integration and trilingual instructional strategies influence learner engagement and communication in Grade 10 Dramatic Arts education?

2. Literature review

Contemporary research highlights technology's transformative role in arts education, enhancing creative expression through digital tools for video recording and virtual performances (Liu et al., 2024; Nazima, 2025). While these tools foster collaboration, they also introduce challenges such as varying digital literacy and device access (Selfa-Sastre et al., 2022). Trilingual pedagogical approaches leverage learners' multilingual skills, enhancing cognitive development and cultural identity, particularly in South Africa's multilingual context (Garcia, 2020; Moyo, 2019; Mashinja, 2024). In dramatic arts, these approaches support understanding of culturally nuanced narratives (Hu & Shu, 2025). Additionally, Karpman's Drama Triangle (1968) analyzes classroom dynamics, particularly motivation and collaboration in multilingual and tech-rich environments (Brown, 2018; Zhang, Xu, & Li, 2025; Liu et al., 2024).

3. Theoretical framework

The study adopts Karpman's Drama Triangle framework as an interpretive lens to analyse social and communicative interactions within the Grade 10 Dramatic Arts classroom. The framework's triadic roles provide a structure for understanding how learners and teachers navigate tensions arising from technology use and trilingual language demands (Teeter, 2023). For example, learners struggling with simultaneous language acquisition and technical skills may unconsciously adopt the victim role. At the same time, educators act as rescuers by providing assistance or enforcing discipline, sometimes slipping into persecutor behaviour (Barnes, 2020). The dynamic tension impacts learning quality and social cohesion during dramatic arts activities, which are inherently interactive and relational (Lac & Donaldson, 2022).

4. Methodology

The qualitative case study design was selected for its strength in exploring complex, context-specific phenomena within real educational settings (Yin, 2018). It allows for an in-depth understanding of the integration of technology and trilingual strategies, emphasising lived experiences and social dynamics.

4.1. Population and sampling

The study employed a purposive sample of 22 learners and 3 teachers involved in dramatic arts. The one school was the only one that had enrolled drama learners from grade 10 to grade 12. The learners were also studying Information Technology (IT) and Computer Applied Technology (CAT) as subjects from grades 10 to 12; hence, the use of technology was of interest to the learners in dramatic arts. The teachers taught dramatic arts at the same school.

4.2. Data collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with all participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Interview guides covered topics such as experiences with technology in dramatic arts lessons, perceptions of trilingual language use, challenges encountered, and social interactions during lessons. Interviews lasted approximately 30-45 minutes, were audio-recorded, and transcribed verbatim (Stainback & Stainback, 1984).

4.3. Data analysis

The data collected was thematically analysed. Thematic analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach: familiarisation, coding, theme development, review, definition, and reporting (Braun, 2021). Coding was both inductive and deductive, with deductive categories drawn from Karpman's Drama Triangle roles. The dual approach facilitated a rich interpretation of data in relation to the theoretical framework and emergent participant themes.

4.4. Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the university ethics committee and the school authority. Informed consent was secured from all participants and guardians where applicable, as outlined by (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured throughout the research.

5. Findings

Findings from the interviewed participants were put into themes.

Theme 1: Technology as a catalyst for engagement and creativity

Figure 1. Technology as a Catalyst for learning Dramatic Arts.

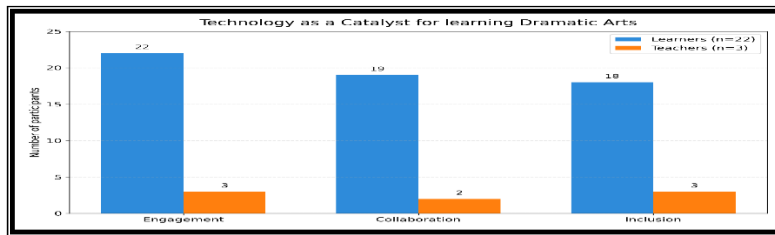


Figure 1. The grouped bar chart compares learner (n = 22) and teacher (n = 3) endorsements of three benefits of digital tools in Dramatic Arts: Engagement, Collaboration, and Inclusion. Both groups view technology positively, with firm agreement on engagement and inclusion. Engagement: Learners = 22/22 (100%); Teachers = 3/3 (100%). Every respondent reported that multimedia and digital tools increase lesson engagement, indicating a unanimous perception that technology makes Dramatic Arts lessons more motivating and accessible. Collaboration: Learners = 19/22 (~86%); Teachers = 2/3 (~67%). A large majority of learners report increased collaboration (group rehearsals, peer feedback). Teachers also report collaboration benefits, but less uniformly; this may reflect different perceptions of what constitutes meaningful collaboration or constraints they observe (e.g., classroom management, time, or tech logistics). Inclusion: Learners = 18/22 (~82%); Teachers = 3/3 (100%). Most learners felt that technology supports linguistic inclusion (subtitles, translated scripts). At the same time, all teachers recognise inclusion benefits—teachers may foreground inclusion as a pedagogical objective, and learners experience it, but less universally.

Theme 2: Trilingual strategies supporting identity and comprehension

Figure 2. Benefits of Dramatisation Using Home Language
Participants highlighted the benefits of strategically using three languages.

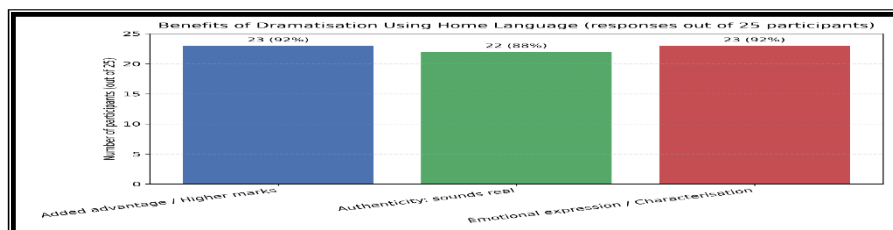


Figure 2. Added advantage with Higher marks: 23/25 participants (92%) reported that using home language gave learners an advantage and correlated with higher marks (20 learners + all 3 teachers). Authenticity — sounds real in performance: 22/25 participants (88%) agreed that performances felt more authentic when learners used their home language (19 learners + all 3 teachers). Emotional expression/Characterisation: 23/25 participants (92%) reported that learners expressed emotions and developed characterisation more easily in their home language (20 learners and all 3 teachers).

Theme 3: Communication role conflicts and support

Applying the Drama Triangle revealed shifts in roles during classroom interactions. Some learner participants portrayed the victim role when overwhelmed by technology and language demands:

Learner Participant 3: *"Sometimes the computer didn't work, and I felt left out."*

Teachers participants reported that they frequently stepped into rescuer roles, assisting with technical difficulties and language explanations, but occasionally assumed persecutor positions during performance assessments and maintained discipline of the subject.

For example, some of the participants reported that:

Teacher Participant 1: *"I had to be strict to keep students focused, especially when technology delays frustrated them."*

Teacher Participant 2: *"I had to create delays so as not to see learners get frustrated by technological connectivity"*

Teacher Participant 3: *"These role dynamics influenced emotional safety and learner confidence, affecting their dramatic expression and participation".*

Theme 4: Challenges balancing multilingualism and technology

Despite positive impacts, obstacles were significantly reported as some of the participants stated that:

Teacher Participant 1: *"Unequal access to devices hampered some learners' participation in the dramatic arts performance"*.

Teacher Participant 2: *"Language balancing required constant negotiation, sometimes causing confusion as learners used their home language"*.

Learner Participant 11: *"I got mixed up switching between languages and forgot lines."*

However, some technical glitches were reported as having disrupted lesson flow, leading to frustration and disengagement, highlighting infrastructure and training gaps in dramatic arts.

6. Discussion

The study highlights that integrating technology and trilingual strategies significantly enhances engagement, cultural inclusivity, and linguistic competence in Grade 10 Dramatic Arts education. This aligns with Garcia's (2020) focus on the cognitive and identity benefits of multilingual pedagogy, while Karpman's Drama Triangle framework emphasises the social and emotional dynamics within classrooms.

The integration of technology and trilingual strategies is essential in Grade 10 Dramatic Arts education, particularly in multicultural and multilingual contexts like South Africa. A qualitative case study involving 25 participants revealed that technology enhances learner engagement and accessibility while trilingual approaches promote cultural inclusivity and linguistic development (Bayode, 2023; Liu, Suboh, & Alizadeh, 2024). However, challenges such as role conflicts and communication tensions emerged, highlighting the necessity for targeted pedagogical support, as conceptualised by Karpman's Drama Triangle (Hu & Shu, 2025). The findings suggest that effective technology integration can facilitate creative expression through digital platforms and collaborative opportunities (Nazima, 2025), although it requires consistent access to devices and digital literacy training (Selfa-Sastre et al., 2022). Additionally, utilizing learners' home languages alongside English fosters deeper comprehension and cultural relevance (Mtshali & Mashiya, 2022), suggesting the need for professional development to optimize role management and enhance educational outcomes in diverse learning environments.

7. Conclusion

The integration of technology and trilingual instructional strategies in Grade 10 Dramatic Arts offers a valuable model for fostering engagement and cultural-linguistic inclusion. Nonetheless, success depends on addressing communicative role dynamics and infrastructural constraints. Teacher training focusing on role awareness and digital competence could be prioritised to navigate the complex social environment of multilingual, technology-enhanced drama classrooms. Future research could adopt longitudinal designs to assess long-term impacts on learner outcomes and explore teacher experiences in greater depth on dramatic arts. Additionally, expanding investigations to multiple schools would enhance generalizability and support the development of scalable interventions.

8. Recommendation

The study recommends integrating digital tools into dramatic arts education through workshops on digital storytelling and virtual reality, fostering multilingual expression. Ongoing professional development for teachers should focus on digital pedagogy and translanguaging. Equitable access to technology, including 'tech hubs' and offline apps, is crucial for all students. Collaborative rehearsal spaces promote inclusivity and cultural exchange. Establishing co-constructed norms encourages student ownership, while peer tech-support training builds community. Policymakers must invest in reliable connectivity and resources for rural schools to enhance arts education. By embracing these recommendations, schools may create a dynamic and inclusive dramatic arts education that leverages the strengths of digital technologies and multilingual approaches. Such initiatives not only enhance engagement and authenticity in learning but also empower students to develop their identities as performers, learners, and creative thinkers. Ultimately, this holistic approach may aim to nurture a generation of culturally aware artists who are equipped for a globalised world.

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