



Practical classroom strategies for English teaching

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Abstract: This research shows practical classroom strategies offered by teachers for English teaching within secondary settings of education in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. The research utilized a qualitative method. Exclude the implementation of different language laws; teachers frequently encounter instructional hurdles when assisting comprehensive language acquisition among multilingual students. To investigate these dynamics, the research involved 30 participants who answered semi-structured interview questions, which provided insights into these dynamics. The research involved 30 participants who answered semi-structured interview questions, providing insights into daily pedagogical sessions, interactive instructional skills, and curriculum delivery mechanisms. The taken data is made using NVivo software to systematically organize the transcripts of qualitative data, recognise recurring conceptual patterns, and manufacture robust thematic codes. The information shows the critical requirement for situation-responsive pedagogical frameworks, aimed literacy assist systems, and enhanced instructional engagement to optimize language results. This research leads to actionable insights for refining classroom methodologies and elevating overall educational levels in linguistically diverse places, offering a comprehensive start for the coming curriculum improvement and professional education practice across similar educational landscapes.

Keywords: Classroom strategies, English teaching, instructional delivery, language acquisition, pedagogical practices.

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Introduction

The global environment of contemporary education places immense emphasis on effective language skills as essential and on effective language as a point of lifelong success and academic achievement. In multilingual educational settings, mastering English as a second or additional language remains a crucial gateway for students seeking to navigate opportunities in developed socio-economic and curricular contexts. Moreover, teachers usually face complex instructional dilemmas when trying to connect the gap between classroom realities and official language laws (Ndwamato et al., 2025). Practical classroom plans for English education are therefore important to inform diverse students' needs, nurture meaningful linguistic engagement, and enhance reading comprehension (Dludla et al., 2024; Monyai, 2024).

Despite the different curriculum interventions, secondary schools in diverse regional situations remain persistent in performance gaps in English proficiency, usually among low-achieving students in linguistically varied settings and resource-constrained (Lumadi and Manyike, 2025). Educators are assigned with taking inclusive pedagogies, like differentiated and translanguaging instruction, to accommodate students from varied linguistic backgrounds (Mabena, 2023; Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2023; Ndu and Makeleni, 2025). Yet, changing these theoretical frameworks into classroom routines daily presents important practical problems (Nxasana et al., 2023). Observing how teachers navigate these dynamics is vital for developing institutional design and student results (Machimana and Genis, 2024).

A critical gap remains in observing how educators on the ground utilize micro-level plans for day-to-day pedagogy, despite extensive tests of macro-level language laws in education (Hibbert, 2023; Asfaha et al., 2023). Prior research reduces the significance of aimed reading interventions and educator professional improvement, yet local adaptations of these plans need deeper empirical evidence (Carter et al., 2024; Mpofu, 2025). This research addresses this gap by investigating practical classroom plans for English education within secondary schools in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, taking into account practical classroom plans for English education within secondary schools in South African Pietermaritzburg, taking educators' methodological adaptations and lived experiences.

Accordingly, this research aims to examine the effectiveness, implementation, and problems of current English education plans in secondary classrooms. By showing these pedagogical methods, the research offers actionable insights to update teacher curriculum structuring, institutional assist systems, and teacher training.

Literature Review

Practical Classroom Strategies

Effective classroom plans are central to connecting the gap between student comprehension and curriculum needs in English classrooms. Teachers increasingly depend on interactive methodologies, collaborative assignments, and structured reading interventions to foster active engagement (Dludla et al., 2024; Carter et al., 2024). Research emphasizes that aimed instructional skills significantly develop reading comprehension and writing proficiency, usually for striving students in diverse educational places (Lumadi and Manyike, 2025). Moreover, incorporating scaffolded activities and localized education materials makes sure that pedagogical methods continue to be adaptable, practical, and directly responsive to the unique needs of secondary school classrooms (Machimana and Genis, 2024).

English Language Teaching

English language teaching works as a primary vehicle for cognitive improvement and academic mobility, based on multilingual societies. Scholars know that precaution or instruction must be added beyond rigid grammar acquisition to encompass critical literacy, functional communication, and contextualized meaning-making (Mpofu, 2025; Ndwamato et al., 2025). Educators are inspired to take balanced literacy methods that differently develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening techniques (Omidire et al., 2025). Moreover, teachers face a constant challenge in aligning instructional delivery with appropriate language levels while maintaining student interest, as they strive to improve educational outcomes across diverse instructional settings (Monyai, 2024).

Pedagogical Challenges

Even though there is availability of innovative frameworks, teachers encounter systemic pedagogical challenges that hinder the optimal instruction of language. These hurdles involve reduced teaching resources, large class sizes, and insufficient professional improvement programs made to meet modern language acquisition requirements (Mpofu, 2023; Dube et al., 2023). In addition, educators often strive to implement differentiated instruction effectively according to diverse cognitive profiles and rigid pacing guides within one classroom (Ndu and Makeleni, 2025). Bridging the gap between everyday classroom constraints and theoretical teaching models requires targeted institutional assistance and strong mentoring systems (Nxasana et al., 2023).

Linguistic Diversity

Linguistic diversity stands for both an instructional challenge and a profound resource in contemporary classrooms. Classrooms comprising speakers of different home languages need inclusive pedagogies that value

students' linguistic repertoires, like purposeful translanguaging and multilingual assist structures (Mabena, 2023; Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2023). When teachers leverage languages at home alongside the English language, students exhibit increased engagement, limited anxiety, and better conceptual observing (Asfaha et al., 2023; Reyneke and Kaiser, 2025). Nurturing an inclusive multilingual place is an improvement for informing systematic inequalities and offering equitable educating skills for all learners (Hibbert, 2023; Wunseh, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

The research into practical classroom plans for English education Prominent theoretical perspectives anchor the research into practical classroom plans for English education. in prominent theoretical perspectives. The research incorporates the Sociocultural Theory of Vygotsky and the Interdependence Theory of Cummins, which includes both BICS and CALP. Cooperation: These frameworks offer a robust lens for observing how language mediation, social interaction, and cognitive improvement intersect in multilingual secondary classrooms.

Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky)

The sociocultural theory of Vygotsky emphasizes that language acquisition and cognitive improvement are fundamentally social processes based on interpersonal communication and cultural situation. A central concept through this framework is the ZPD, which explains the distance between their potential improvement along guidance by educators utilizing scaffolding and interactive dialogue as mediating tools through the ZPD. This theory assists the use of practical classroom plans that advise peer collaboration, active verbal participation, and structured instruction to connect gaps in language comprehension.

Methodology

This research takes a qualitative research design through an interpretive paradigm to show practical classroom skills for English teaching in the education of secondary schools in South African Pietermaritzburg. This method is well possible for taking the instructional beliefs, subjective lived skills, and day-to-day pedagogical approaches of teachers navigating diverse linguistic landscapes. Primary data is taken along with comprehensive semi-structured questions in interviews. To make sure systematic organization and methodological rigor are present, all audio-recorded interviews and practical are transcribed verbatim and taken into NVivo software. The software facilitates skilled qualitative management of data, confirming the investigator to generate initial codes, related group concepts, and

synthesize an overarching thematic efficient structure. Along with this rigorous analytical method, the research shows meaningful patterns regarding how educators optimize learners' engagement and lower instructional barriers, ultimately offering credibility.

Population and Sample

The target population for this study comprises secondary school educators specializing in English language teaching across selected schools in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. To achieve rich, information-rich data aligned with the qualitative objectives, a purposive sampling technique was employed to select thirty participants. This sample size ensures saturation, allowing the research to capture a diverse range of pedagogical experiences, classroom management techniques, and instructional challenges. Participants were chosen based on their active teaching experience, exposure to multilingual classrooms, and willingness to share insights regarding practical strategies for improving English literacy and comprehension among secondary learners.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed an inductive thematic approach, moving from raw qualitative transcripts to coherent, overarching conceptual categories. Guided by the principles of qualitative interpretation, the process involved familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, searching for recurring patterns, reviewing themes against the coded extracts, and defining the final thematic structure. This systematic process allowed the researcher to uncover underlying meanings related to teacher adaptations, instructional hurdles, and the effective use of multilingual resources. The analytical depth ensured that the voices of the thirty participants were accurately represented, yielding reliable and contextually grounded insights into language pedagogy.

Data Import and Organisation

All audio-recorded semi-structured interviews were transcribed verbatim to maintain textual integrity and prepare the data for software processing. The resulting textual transcripts were systematically imported into NVivo 15 software as individual internal source documents. Within the software environment, the data was organized into structured folders categorized by participant codes and school locations. Initial source classification sheets were created to manage demographic attributes. This digital organisation established a secure, centralized repository, enabling efficient retrieval, rapid cross-referencing, and seamless management of the extensive qualitative dataset throughout the coding and synthesis stages.

Table 1: Thematic Analysis Summary Table (Pietermaritzburg - NVivo 15)

Main Theme	Sub-Themes	NVivo 15 Coded Nodes	Description & Empirical Focus
Practical Classroom Strategies	Interactive Learning & Scaffolding	Group work, Peer tutoring, Scaffolded reading tasks	Teachers utilize collaborative structures and step-by-step guidance to enhance student engagement and text comprehension.
English Language Teaching	Balanced Literacy & Skills Integration	Grammar integration, Vocabulary expansion, Reading fluency	Instructional delivery combines foundational language mechanics with meaningful communication and critical literacy goals.
Pedagogical Challenges	Resource Constraints & Class Dynamics	Large classes, Limited materials, Pacing pressure	Educators encounter structural hurdles, including high student-to-teacher ratios and rigid curriculum timelines that impede differentiation.
Linguistic Diversity	Multilingual Support & Translanguaging	Code-switching, Home language integration, Inclusive spaces	Leveraging learners' diverse linguistic repertoires bridges comprehension gaps and reduces anxiety in multicultural classrooms.

The table presents Thematic Analysis Summary Table (Pietermaritzburg - Practical classroom strategies for English teaching).

Source: Researcher collected data

Table 1 presents the qualitative thematic structure derived from NVivo 15 analysis of interviews with thirty educators in Pietermaritzburg. The findings highlight how teachers implement practical classroom strategies, such as scaffolded reading and group work, alongside balanced English language teaching to foster comprehension. However, instructional delivery is constrained by pedagogical challenges, including large classes and rigid pacing. To navigate these hurdles, educators harness linguistic diversity through purposeful translanguaging and home language integration, creating inclusive environments that bridge communication gaps and enhance student learning outcomes in multicultural secondary classrooms.

Coding Queries and Visualization in NVivo

The study utilized the qualitative analysis of educator interviews in Pietermaritzburg, advanced NVivo 15 tools

such as text search queries, matrix coding queries, and visual maps were utilized to examine relationships among the coded variables. Matrix coding queries allowed for the cross-tabulation of pedagogical challenges against practical classroom strategies, revealing how resource constraints directly influence teachers' selection of scaffolding techniques. Furthermore, word frequency and cluster analysis visualizations generated clear conceptual diagrams, mapping out the intersection between linguistic diversity and English language teaching efficacy. These digital visualizations provided robust, transparent evidence supporting the qualitative findings, ensuring a comprehensive synthesis of participant narratives regarding secondary school language instruction.

Table 2: Coding Queries and Visualization in NVivo (Pietermaritzburg Secondary Education)

Query Type	NVivo 15 Tool / Function	Target Variables / Focus	Analytical Insight & Output
Text Search Query	Word Frequency & Term Matrix	Linguistic Diversity & Translanguaging	Identified prominent cluster terms (e.g., code-switching, home language) showing high frequency across teacher transcripts.
Matrix Coding Query	Cross-Tabulation Tool	Pedagogical Challenges vs. Classroom Strategies	Demonstrated that educators in larger classes predominantly rely on peer tutoring and scaffolded group tasks to manage constraints.
Coding Comparison Query	Inter-Coder Reliability Check	Coded Nodes & Sub-Themes	Verified consistency and reliability across qualitative coding categories related to English language teaching.
Visualization Map	Project Map / Concept Chart	All Four Core Research Variables	Visually mapped the interconnected pathways linking linguistic diversity, instructional challenges, and practical teaching strategies.

The table presents Coding Queries and Visualization in NVivo (Pietermaritzburg Practical classroom strategies for English teaching). **Source:** Researcher collected data

Table 2 details the advanced NVivo 15 queries and visualizations utilized to interrogate the qualitative dataset. Text search queries revealed high frequencies of terms related to translanguaging, confirming its central role in daily instruction. Matrix coding queries demonstrated how educators strategically deploy peer tutoring to mitigate resource constraints in large classrooms. Furthermore, coding comparison queries established analytical reliability across all nodes, while visual project maps illustrated the complex intersections connecting linguistic diversity, pedagogical challenges, and practical teaching strategies. Together, these digital tools enhanced analytical

transparency and provided empirical depth to the study's qualitative findings.

Transcript Analysis Table

To provide granular empirical grounding for the qualitative findings, transcript excerpts from the thirty teacher participants were analyzed and coded within NVivo 15. These excerpts capture the direct lived experiences, instructional adaptations, and classroom realities of educators navigating secondary school English teaching in Pietermaritzburg. By anchoring thematic categories in verbatim data, the analysis bridges abstract pedagogical theory with actual classroom practice.

Table 3

Transcript Analysis Table using NVivo (Pietermaritzburg Practical classroom strategies for English teaching)

Participant ID & Source	Core Research Variable	Coded NVivo Node	Transcript Excerpt / Raw Data	Analytical Interpretation
Participant 01 (Transcript)	Practical Classroom Strategies	Scaffolded Reading Tasks	"When students struggle with complex texts, I break the reading into manageable chunks and use peer groups to guide comprehension."	Highlights the reliance on structured peer collaboration to assist learners with difficult texts.
Participant 07 (Transcript)	English Language Teaching	Vocabulary Expansion	"Grammar alone doesn't work; we must embed vocabulary building directly into daily conversational and writing exercises."	Emphasizes the shift from isolated grammar drills to contextualized language application.
Participant 14 (Transcript)	Pedagogical Challenges	Resource Constraints	"With over fifty learners in one room, individualized attention is nearly impossible, forcing us to adopt group-based management."	Illustrates how high student-to-teacher ratios restrict differentiated teaching and drive collective strategies.
Participant 22 (Transcript)	Linguistic Diversity	Code-Switching & Translanguaging	"Allowing learners to use their home language briefly to explain a concept clears up confusion before switching back to English."	Demonstrates how purposeful translanguaging lowers anxiety and bridges comprehension gaps.

The table presents Transcript Analysis Table using NVivo (Pietermaritzburg Practical classroom strategies for English teaching).

Source: Researcher collected data

Table 3 grounds the study's qualitative findings in verbatim data from teacher transcripts in Pietermaritzburg. Participant excerpts reveal how educators utilize peer collaboration for scaffolded reading and integrate vocabulary within daily writing tasks. Furthermore, the transcripts highlight systemic hurdles, such as large classes exceeding fifty learners, which compel teachers to rely on group-based management. Finally, data excerpts confirm that purposeful code-switching successfully mitigates linguistic barriers, lowering student anxiety and bridging comprehension gaps in multicultural English classrooms.

Discussion

The findings of this qualitative study illuminate the complex realities of English language teaching within secondary

schools in Pietermaritzburg, demonstrating that effective instruction relies heavily on context-responsive methodologies and adaptive scaffolding. As revealed through the NVivo analysis, educators actively deploy practical classroom strategies, such as structured peer collaboration and chunked reading tasks, to bridge comprehension gaps among diverse learners (Dludla et al., 2024; Carter et al., 2024). These pedagogical approaches align closely with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, confirming that social interaction and guided peer support effectively expand learners' zones of proximal development in challenging linguistic environments.

Furthermore, the research underscores that successful English language teaching extends beyond traditional grammar instruction, requiring integrated vocabulary

development and functional communication tasks (Mpofu, 2025; Nndwamoto et al., 2025). However, instructional delivery remains severely constrained by systemic pedagogical challenges, notably large class sizes and rigid pacing guides that restrict individualized attention (Nxasana et al., 2023; Ndu & Makeleni, 2025). To navigate these structural hurdles, teachers leverage linguistic diversity through purposeful translanguaging and home language integration. This practice resonates with Cummins' Interdependence Theory, demonstrating that permitting brief code-switching reduces affective filters, validates learners' linguistic repertoires, and enhances overall academic engagement (Mabena, 2023; Asfaha et al., 2023; Reyneke & Kaiser, 2025). Ultimately, the synthesis of these findings highlights that overcoming resource limitations requires embracing multilingualism as an instructional asset rather than a barrier, necessitating comprehensive institutional reforms to support educators.

Practical Implications

The empirical insights generated from this study offer crucial, actionable recommendations for educational stakeholders, curriculum developers, and teacher training institutions striving to improve educational outcomes. First, professional development programs must actively equip secondary educators with practical, context-specific training in translanguaging pedagogies, multi-level classroom management, and differentiated instruction designed specifically for overcrowded classrooms (Mpofu, 2023; Monyai, 2024). Second, educational authorities and school governing bodies should consider revising rigid curriculum pacing policies to provide teachers with the instructional flexibility needed to implement scaffolded reading interventions and deep vocabulary enrichment effectively (Lumadi & Manyike, 2025). Finally, educational districts must supply adequate multilingual learning resources that formally validate students' home languages, fostering more inclusive, equitable, and supportive secondary English classrooms across diverse regional and socio-economic settings.

Conclusion

This study comprehensively explored practical classroom strategies for English teaching in Pietermaritzburg, utilizing a rigorous qualitative research design and NVivo 15 software to analyze data from thirty secondary educators. The investigation successfully addressed its core objectives by examining how teachers navigate severe resource constraints and linguistic diversity through targeted pedagogical adaptations, peer collaboration, and purposeful translanguaging. Grounded in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and Cummins' Interdependence Theory, the findings demonstrate that integrating students' home languages bridges critical comprehension gaps and significantly enhances academic literacy. Furthermore, the analysis

revealed that systemic pedagogical challenges such as large class sizes and rigid pacing are effectively mitigated when educators employ scaffolded learning and balanced literacy tasks. Ultimately, addressing these structural hurdles through comprehensive professional teacher training, institutional support, and flexible curriculum frameworks is paramount for optimizing English language instruction, fostering inclusive classrooms, and ensuring sustainable learner success in diverse educational environments.

Limitations and Future Studies

While this study provides valuable insights into secondary English language teaching in Pietermaritzburg, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the qualitative research design relies on a purposive sample of thirty educators within a specific geographic region, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to broader national or international contexts. Second, the reliance on self-reported semi-structured interview data may introduce subjective bias, as teacher responses reflect perceived rather than directly observed classroom practices. Future studies should address these constraints by incorporating longitudinal classroom observations and larger, more geographically diverse sample sizes. Additionally, quantitative or mixed-methods research could measure the direct impact of translanguaging and scaffolded reading tasks on learner performance metrics, offering a more comprehensive understanding of effective language pedagogy across different school settings.

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Disclaimer

Sentiments voiced in the article are those from authors and not for organizations or individuals interviewed.

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