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## Linguistic Repertoires in the Writing Experiences of Multilingual Postgraduate Students in a Higher Education Institution<sup>9</sup>

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### Abstract

The linguistic diversity that multilingual students bring into their postgraduate studies, combined with the persistent dominance of English as the sole language of instruction and assessment at postgraduate level, especially in South Africa, requires urgent attention. This study seeks to critically examine the writing experiences of multilingual postgraduate students in a specific higher education institution in South Africa. Using Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia, which proposes that language use is influenced by multiple-voice expressions, discourses, and power structures. This study explores how multilingual postgraduate students navigate and negotiate their linguistic repertoires while striving to produce writing that meets the high demands of academic discourse in English academic writing. Qualitative research methods will be adopted, utilising written feedback from students participating in the academic writing workshops for multilingual postgraduate students. Thematic analysis will be used to analyse emergent themes. Preliminary insights suggest that multilingual postgraduate students face challenges when navigating between creative and innovative thinking in their home languages and expressing their ideas in English only to meet the postgraduate writing expectations and standards. These linguistic tensions affect the academic success of multilingual postgraduate students. The study hopes to contribute to the development of inclusive pedagogical interventions that recognise and leverage postgraduate students' multilingual resources and their use to enhance overall academic writing proficiency in English.

**Keywords:** multilingualism, postgraduate academic writing, multilingual postgraduate students, higher education, linguistic diversity

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## Introduction

The English language continues to dominate academic writing in multilingual postgraduate settings in South African higher education. To succeed in postgraduate studies, multilingual students, for whom English is a second language, are expected to navigate their English incompetencies until they produce a quality text in the language. Scholars such as Zhang-Wu (2022) regarded English academic writing as a gatekeeper of academic achievement and success for non-native English postgraduate students. In response to the undesirable power of the English language in multilingual postgraduate academic writing settings, translingual writing challenges monoglossic ideologies by viewing linguistic diversity as a norm, thus leveraging multilingual writers' agency (Canagarajah, 2013). In fact, translingual writing affords multilingual writers an opportunity to draw upon their entire linguistic repertoire at various stages of their writing to enhance their writing (Song & Lau, 2025). Within the translingual writing paradigm, a deviation from the English academic norms is not viewed as a sign of incompetence but as alternative ways of meaning-making using their entire linguistic resources (Sun et al., 2021). There is a paucity of studies, especially in South Africa, on multilingual postgraduate students' writing experiences in an English monolingual higher education system. This study, therefore, critically examines the writing experiences of multilingual postgraduate students in a specific higher education institution in South Africa. It asks the two questions:

- What are the writing experiences of multilingual postgraduate students?
- How do linguistic repertoires of multilingual postgraduate students influence their writing experiences in a higher education institution in South Africa?

### Writing in Multilingual Postgraduate Settings

Writing is crucial to postgraduate studies across all disciplines. It is through writing that postgraduate students showcase the extent to which they have grappled with the knowledge domains of their disciplines. In multilingual postgraduate settings such as South Africa, where most postgraduate students are writing in their second language, writing can be challenging and stressful (Cumming, 2013). This is particularly evident when their second-language writing is subject to evaluation and assessment. In their second language, multilingual students are expected to express high levels of creativity and innovation while maintaining mastery of the language of writing (Canagarajah, 2013). At the postgraduate level, good writing does not mimic and echo someone else's words, but it is a good dialogue—always mixing, changing, incorporating, answering, anticipating, and merging the writer and the reader in the construction of meaning (DeLyser, 2003). In other words, writing at postgraduate level moves beyond mechanical language skills into cognitive processes that are grounded in the writing process of drafting, planning, and revising ideas into a final product (Song & Lau, 2025). The major challenge is that multilingual postgraduate students are expected to accomplish all these complex writing processes in a second language to produce a good piece of academic text. It is under these challenging circumstances that multilingual postgraduate students realise that English competency is crucial; it is the "alpha and omega" for good writing and success in postgraduate studies. They feel that their home languages are not important at all and cannot assist them in attaining competent writing. However, van der Walt and Klapwijk (2015) were of the opinion that good writing does not mean that one must avoid or ignore other languages they bring into the writing process.

Researchers have been curious about multilingual approaches to postgraduate writing (Canagarajah, 2011, 2013, 2019; Cumming, 2013; Song & Lau, 2025) and their benefits for multilingual students. Song and Lau (2025), for example, investigated ways in which bilingual Afrikaans-English and Swiss-German university students utilise their home languages and for what purposes during their English academic writing processes. Their findings indicated that bilingual students generate their initial thinking

during the planning stages in their home languages, and translate those ideas into English at a later stage. Dong (2022) also examined dissertation writing of postgraduate multilingual students and found that the integration of students' multilingual repertoires enhanced their multilingual writing identity, improved knowledge construction, and supported writing process during brainstorming, drafting, reflecting, or discussing.

Cumming (2013) agreed that when multilingual students are empowered and made aware that their multilingual repertoires are a resource—not a barrier—they deliberately and strategically employ them to enrich their academic writing processes. Similarly, Canagarajah (2013) argued that for multilinguals to translanguage, whether they speak or write, is a natural phenomenon that multilingual students employ intuitively. Canagarajah further asserted that this natural translanguaging phenomenon of multilingual writers is often oppressed and suppressed in academic writing contexts where one language is dominant and students are expected to assimilate the conventions of a superior language and are even penalised for not adopting the writing practices of the “main” language. This study is interested in understanding the writing experiences of postgraduate multilingual students in a South African university where English is the medium of instruction.

### **Multilingual Approach to Writing**

Postgraduate writing in South Africa is persistently English monolingual, despite the fact that most students in the postgraduate programmes are multilingual. Within the English monolingual and rigid postgraduate writing contexts, multilingual students' home languages are often overlooked and silenced in pursuit of imposing English native writing practices on them (Seltzer, 2022). Study of how to incorporate the marginalised multilingual voices of postgraduate students thus remains urgent.

A multilingual approach to writing, fosters linguistic heterogeneity in writing (Horner, et al., 2010). It views linguistic diversity in the postgraduate writing spaces as a norm given global multilingual realities. Multilingual approach to writing “empowers writers with the agency to shape their own language practices and challenges the monolingual ideology” (Horner et al. 2010, p. 10). From these perspectives, a multilingual approach to writing emphasises the fluidity of linguistic repertoires that multilingual writers bring to the writing process, and encourages them to draw from these multiple linguistic resources for meaning-making (Canagarajah, 2006). In fact, the multilingual approach to writing resists the monolingual approaches to writing acknowledging and appreciating the diverse languages that multilingual postgraduate students possess. Canagarajah (2024) argued that multilingual writing approaches decolonise conventional writing practices by embracing non-standard linguistic resources of students.

At the centre of the multilingual writing approach, also referred to as interlingual writing approach (Canagarajah, 2006), is the linguistic heterogeneity that focuses on the fluidity and dynamic nature of languaging rather than perceiving languages as rigid and separate entities. In other words, linguistic repertoires of multilingual students do not operate in independent compounds in their minds; instead, they coexist in permissible and collective ways. This theoretical view of a multilingual writing approach enables the multilingual writer to draw from a variety of linguistic resources at their disposal without relying on named languages during the writing process (Seltzer, 2022). According to Canagarajah (2020, p. 42), multilingual writing approach can be explained as “a synergy of meaning-making resources and a contingent and emergent process which transcends the traditional boundaries of languages, registers, modalities, as well as cultures and knowledge.” This implies that the meaning-making process of multilingual writers during a writing process is not restricted to a particular language, but is made possible by pulling together the assemblage of linguistic resources at their disposal, including those repertoires that are formal or recognised and those that are not.

In the context of this study, multilingual students are expected to navigate their postgraduate writing in English, which is the medium of instruction at the university. Academic writing support in multilingual postgraduate workshops is provided both virtually and face-to-face to assist students with their writing practices. This study therefore explores the writing experiences of multilingual postgraduate students to understand the influence of their multilingual linguistic repertoires on their writing practices.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is underpinned by a linguistic repertoire theoretical framework. The key aspects of this theoretical framework include linguistic varieties beyond named languages, and the ways languages are used in society (López Ferrero et al., 2019; Oostendorp & van Zyl, 2022). This theoretical framework also acknowledges the fluidity and hybridity of linguistic forms, which are dynamic and ever evolving (Feltman, 2025). According to Oostendorp and van Zyl, the framework highlights agency and identity in how individuals uphold identities and negotiate their social positions, and the extent at which they control their communicative environment. The framework further underscores the fact that repertoires are not only cognitive but include social, historical, and personal contexts in the manner that people experience their languages (Busch, 2015). The framework includes concepts such as scope, which forms the social function of resources, and access, which has to do with the ability to acquire resources. These concepts link individual repertoires with societal multilingualism and the notion of inequality (Weirich, 2021).

According to Oostendorp (2023), the framework originated from sociolinguistics to account for the complexity of linguistic practices beyond a monolingual view of communicative competence. However, the focus shifted later to account for the theoretical concepts of diversity, hybridity, and fluidity in modern communication; the latest scholarship highlights thinkers from the Global South and challenges Western-oriented narratives (Oostendorp, 2023). The framework has been applied in education where researchers frame their understanding of multilingual learners in the context of diverse linguistic resources in a classroom in order to develop pedagogical approaches that acknowledge learners' repertoires (Feltman, 2025; Oostendorp & van Zyl, 2022). Furthermore, it has been applied in identity studies to provide a lens for investigating how individuals construct complex identities through multilingual communities (Feltman, 2025; Oostendorp & van Zyl, 2022). Weirich (2021) further asserted that the framework is applicable in sociolinguistic inequality in such concepts as scope and access that account for how societal structures influence access to certain linguistic resources, which links micro-level individual repertoires to macro-level social relations.

While research on multilingual pedagogy exists (Ngcobo & Roya, 2024; Ntombela & Mpherwane, 2024), there is very little examination of the writing practices of postgraduate multilingual students, and even less situated in the unique South African context where multilingualism is the norm. Thus, this study seeks to critically examine the writing experiences of multilingual postgraduate students in a specific higher education institution in South Africa. The goal of the study is to provide insight into the influence of multilingual repertoires on the writing process of multilingual postgraduate students in an effort to better support them at a university level.

### **Multilingual Writers**

The term "multilingual writer" has come to be understood in a variety of ways in the field of academic writing. Specifically, this designation has often been assigned to students writing in English whose home or first language would not be considered English according to subjective observation. This term has thus become an umbrella term for "a body of students contributing a diverse range of writing perspectives, practices, and expectations to the writing classroom" (Alvarez, 2018, p. 342). In the South African context, however, multilingualism is the norm; nearly every student would be considered a multilingual writer. And yet, despite this, the majority of graduate work is expected to be produced in the English language.

The term “multilingual writer” is in itself problematic. Such terminology draws a distinction between multilingual and monolingual ideologies, and it places multilingual language practices on the periphery (García & Kleifgen, 2010). However, in the South African context, multilingualism is the norm, not the outlier. Practices based on a monolingual English imperative, therefore, present challenges in that they do not align with students’ lived or educational experiences, and are tied to colonial conventionality and dominant ideologies that elevate English over other languages.

### **Multiliteracies and Multicompetence**

A multilingual (or interlingual) approach to writing approaches language and the production of language as a fluid process (Canagarajah, 2006). Multilingual writers inevitably think and move within the context of multiple languages, utilising the entirety of their linguistic repertoires when using language to complete a task. There has been significant scholarship regarding how such linguistic fluidity positively impacts the brain, particularly in regard to executive functioning (see Abutalebi et al., 2012; Barac & Bialystok, 2011, 2012; Bialystok, 2011, 2015; Kroll & Bialystok, 2013). Addressing this linguistic pluralism in academic writing is therefore paramount—both in the South African context and in an increasingly global world (Alvarez, 2018).

Multicompetence, a term introduced by Cook (1992), recognised the role of multilingualism in a sociolinguistic context (Franceschini, 2011). When defining literacy multimodally, the term can be applied to individuals who may be regarded as functionally literate in more than one language (Skerrett, 2013). Yet, despite their linguistic aptitude, the researchers of this study theorise that multilingual postgraduate students feel that their multilingualism detracts rather than supports their English writing, and thus impacts their writing experiences. The workshops utilised in this study were thus conceived to assist graduate students, not only with their writing practice, but to address the mindset of multilingualism being a resource, not a barrier, to elevated academic writing practice.

### **Methodology**

The methodology employed for this study consisted of qualitative analysis based on workshop participant attendance and open-ended questionnaire responses. Eighteen questionnaires were returned, and responses to the two questions were analysed. Researchers identified and recorded the responses. Due to the relatively small sample size, it was possible to record participants’ responses verbatim. Nevertheless, recurring responses were recorded only once. There were two questionnaires: a pre-workshop questionnaire (Table 1) one with one question, and a post-workshop questionnaire (Table 2) with two questions. The pre-workshop questionnaire was meant to capture students’ expectations and motivation to attend the workshop, whilst the post-workshop questionnaire was meant to capture students’ experiences of the workshop.

### **Setting**

This study took place at two campuses of a specific South African university. The first campus is located in an urban centre, while the second campus is in a rural area. The urban campus is decidedly more diverse than the rural campus due to location and the size of the student population (30,000 enrolled students on the main urban campus versus 3,800 on the rural satellite campus). Despite this, both campuses feature primary instruction in English, which is not the home language of the majority of enrolled students. Both campuses offer various graduate programmes in a number of different faculties that host both South African and international graduate students. These sites were ideal for conducting research due to the prominence of the university, the diverse range of graduate student participants, and two of the researchers’ affiliations with the university. Multilingual integration is also touted as a pillar of advancement at this university, aiming to support students across education levels and comply with national education policies.

### **The Researchers**

One associate professor at another South African university, one director of the Academy for Multilingualism at the target university, and one American fellow assisting with teaching and research at the target university conducted the workshops and collected data. All have experience teaching writing in the university setting. None had worked with the student participants prior to conducting the study. The associate professor and the American fellow were the workshop presenters at both campuses.

### **The Participants**

The 37 participants self-selected by registering for the workshops. All were enrolled in either honours, master's, or doctoral programmes at the target university. All 12 South African languages were represented among the participants, as home or learned languages, as well as a number of international languages. Participants were primarily South African but also included students from Zimbabwe and Cameroon. Of the 37 students registered, 18 completed the post-workshop questionnaire. This discrepancy was due to students having to leave early to attend classes or other engagements, or students not returning the questionnaires.

The 18 participants who returned the questionnaires were from the following faculties: Education (7), Humanities (8), Science and Agriculture (2), Health Sciences (1), and were registered for the following programmes: undergraduate (1), honours (6), master's (5), doctoral (5), postdoctoral (1). Consent to use participant responses for research purposes was obtained from participants. All responses were voluntarily provided by participants. Participants' personal information was not collected and the questionnaires remained anonymised.

### **Workshop and Questionnaire**

Workshops took place over the course of one 4-hour session on each campus. During the workshop, the two presenters split their time. Discussions, activities, and PowerPoint slides were components of each presentation. The same workshop, facilitated by the same presenters, was given on both university campuses. After the workshop, students were asked to complete a questionnaire. The responses to this questionnaire represent the data collected. Research approval and ethical clearance for the questionnaires were provided through the target university.

### **Data Analysis**

As part of preparing for the workshop, a questionnaire with a single question was circulated to participants who showed interest in the workshop. The question sought to get participants' reasons for wanting to attend the workshop. Their response to the workshop was based on the advertisement, which provided the title of the workshop, facilitators, and the target audience. The participants' pre-workshop responses are captured in Table 1.

#### **Table 1**

##### *Pre-Workshop Questionnaire Responses*

##### **Reasons for attending the workshop**

- Self development
- Improve writing
- Enhance research skills
- Improve academic performance
- Writing dissertation
- Writing research proposal
- Compulsory for bursary
- Writing best thesis

- Learn
- Expressing in English
- Multilingual practices
- Research skills
- Multilingual research
- Enhance academic writing
- Understand writing workshops
- Learn about multilingualism

A qualitative analysis was undertaken by researchers to examine post-workshop questionnaire data. Due to the small sample size, researchers were able to read through questionnaires and identify commonalities in the feedback. At the urban campus, 20 participants registered and nine questionnaires were completed. At the rural campus, 17 students registered and nine questionnaires were completed. Thus, the sample size analysed consisted of 18 questionnaires. The questionnaire consisted of two questions: What did you like the most about the workshop? How can we improve the workshop? Table 2 captures the responses of the participants.

**Table 2**

*Post-Workshop Questionnaire Responses*

<b>What did you like most about the workshop?</b>	<b>How can we improve the workshop?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How multilingualism work in writing and communication</i></li> <li>• <i>Diversity of languages</i></li> <li>• <i>Improvement of language skills</i></li> <li>• <i>Enhanced cognitive abilities</i></li> <li>• <i>Increased confidence in multilingualism</i></li> <li>• <i>Multilingualism and translanguaging in academic career</i></li> <li>• <i>Language repertoires and translanguaging</i></li> <li>• <i>Practicability and hands on approach</i></li> <li>• <i>Interactions and sharing opinions</i></li> <li>• <i>Importance of multilingualism and translanguaging</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include all spoken languages in the vicinity</li> <li>• More engaging exercises</li> <li>• Regularise workshops</li> <li>• Provide more time</li> <li>• Market it more</li> <li>• Include sign language</li> <li>• Time management</li> </ul>

**Discussion of findings**

The reasons for attending the workshop reveal the students' various motivations and situatedness. Some envisaged the engagement as instrumental in helping them navigate thesis, dissertation, and even proposal writing. Among the skills required to complete a research proposal, dissertation, or thesis are clear writing and effective editing (Hofstee, 2006). For university students, it is important to make multilingualism work for them in crafting the important documents in their postgraduate journeys. This comes from the reality that only one language presides over academic writing whilst other languages, in which students might be more proficient, are excluded. This is often termed as the de facto status of English (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2020). There is also an implied acknowledgement by students that they do not feel they have attained the level of language proficiency necessary for academic engagements, hence a desire to improve their academic writing and English expression. The level of English

proficiency, which manifests in writing deficiencies, is often reported as a barrier to student attainment in education (Ntombela & Ngubane, 2022). The students also expected to use multilingualism for personal development, and to increase their knowledge of multilingualism and multilingual practices.

Linked to the instrumental utility of the workshops is students' expectation to hone their research skills and to learn more about multilingualism. This obviously speaks to university education in general, where certain subjects that resonate with one's location become the focus of intellectual pursuit. This is especially true for topics that have an emancipatory promise such as multilingualism (Heugh & Stroud, 2020). Interestingly, the complex nature of university education is such that some activities are positioned for compliance purposes—such as the student whose motivation to attend the workshop was to fulfil the bursary requirement. Whilst one might not expect any benefit for such a participant, workshops have a way of changing mindsets.

Notably, whilst some students' expectations (such as wanting to learn more about multilingualism practices) resonate with the objectives of the workshop, others (such as wanting to improve academic writing) reveal the principal concerns of postgraduate students, and areas where they need support. Multilingualism is considered a catalyst in providing a space for students to get assistance (Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2024). That is, because the target participants were multilingual postgraduate students whose concern was writing in a multilingual context, the workshop was seen as capable of addressing any writing shortcomings.

There is undoubtedly a positive uptake of multilingualism and related concepts of translanguaging and language repertoires. This reflects the inherently multilingual nature of the majority of South African students, who, notably, have not been given the opportunity to tap into the advantages of being multilingual (Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2024; Ntombela et al., 2024). The default approach in academic writing has been monolingual, effectively suspending the incorporation of multilingual realities in text construction. The workshops were therefore intended to challenge and unsettle the mistaken practice of dismissing students' multilingualism.

Furthermore, as participants appeared fascinated, it is apparent that they no longer view linguistic multiplicity and diversity as a problem. Nevertheless, academia seems prone to promoting monolingualism and a singularity of expression through its emphasis on the English cultural tradition in composition (Weekly et al., 2022). In this arrangement, other languages are often seen as interfering with the Anglo-Saxon pattern of thought. However, the workshops underscored the practicality of allowing various thought processes in the different languages participants possess. This was obviously a departure from what participants had experienced for most of their academic careers.

The findings also suggest a relationship between multilingualism and cognition, as evidenced by enhanced language skills. Research abounds that testifies to the positive transference of first-language acquisition to second-language acquisition (Ambele, 2022; Ambele & Todd, 2021; Ralushai et al., 2025). In other words, a good grounding in the first language sets a better foundation for the learning of the second language. It therefore goes without saying that when languages that a student possesses are allowed to contribute to their writing process, their level of cognition is bound to get better.

Participants revealed an increased confidence in multilingualism, which contrasts with the prevalent vote of no confidence. Lack of confidence in multilingualism arises from its lack of contribution to the production of academic texts. Students are rightly expected to see no benefit in languages that do not contribute to their academic engagement and success. Therefore, their level of confidence is equally expected to increase when they discover that they can utilise their multilingualism in text construction.

Participants' confidence in multilingualism was further enhanced through the practical application of multilingual theoretical aspects. The workshops provided practical exercises to show participants how to apply multilingual strategies. These exercises demonstrated the inclusion of various languages in

generating ideas for their writing, which allowed them to tap into various expressions adapted from the diverse languages in their possession.

In addition, participants felt free to interact and voice their opinions. In a situation that acknowledges diverse linguistic presence, participants are no longer restricted to communicating in one language (in which they may have varying levels of proficiency) but are encouraged to express themselves across languages in which they feel comfortable. In this way, meaning is negotiated, resulting in an enriched text. Furthermore, negotiation process fosters deeper learning for all involved.

However, not all languages were catered for. For instance, Sign Language, which is the 12th official language, was not represented or included in the workshops. This was despite the fact that multilingualism emphasises inclusion, which means that some languages should not be seen as prioritised at the expense of others. This was an important observation by participants because historically, some languages were left behind because they were not deemed essential in serious academic transactions. The Deaf community continues to suffer neglect because Sign Language is often treated as an add-on, and not as a pivotal part of their existence (Matshanisi & Ntombela, 2024). There is a critical need therefore to make sure that such workshops actively incorporate Sign Language and other languages in the vicinity of participants. This can be established during the time of preparation by asking potential participants to indicate their language repertoires.

Whilst the praise for the practicability of the workshop was evident, there seemed to be fewer engaging exercises. A desire for more practical, engaging exercises underscores the importance of ample opportunities for students to practice and actively participate. This is important because part of not embracing multilingualism is based on not knowing how to break from monolingual practice. In fact, as Heugh and Stroud (2020) contended, the South African Constitution and the Language-in-Education policy support multilingualism, except that implementation has not been followed through. Thus, engaging exercises in the context of these workshops assists in escaping the same trap of reducing multilingualism to a theoretical construct without practical application.

Nonetheless, there is always a challenge of limited time, especially for practical sessions—not only time for practising the concepts but also the management of time. Time management includes starting on time and finishing on time, which is often a challenge. The perception of limited time is sometimes caused by interest and engagement. Interesting activities seem to finish when one still desires for more. Unfortunately, there is not enough time to cater for all individual needs in one workshop session.

The desire for more time can also be interpreted as the desire for more workshops. Yet, such a workshop conducted once a semester gives the impression that it is merely one of those boxes that must be ticked. And, a once-a-semester workshop may not be enough to transform practice. If the outcome is to transform practice, then it is fair enough to regularise the workshops. This is even more urgent for students who, for the greater part of their academic careers, have been exposed to a monolingual approach.

Additionally, participants expressed the need for the workshop to be marketed. In fact, the number of potential students who could attend the workshop does not tally with the actual number who attended. This leads participants to think that the workshop was not adequately marketed. Nonetheless, the nature of a workshop generally prescribes the number of participants, especially when there are practical sessions and a limited number of facilitators. A writing workshop also means that a timeous follow-up needs to be extended by the facilitator to all participants, which is not possible with many attendees.

## **Conclusion**

There are various reasons for students to want to attend multilingual workshops, chief of which stems from their need to navigate the production of pivotal documents such as research proposals, dissertations, and theses. For multilingual students writing at a postgraduate level, it is important to get assistance from multilingualism as the main asset in their possession. Students also displayed a desire to learn more about multilingualism, which suggests that they see a link between multilingualism and postgraduate writing. They may not be alone in seeing such a link because some bursaries seem to have prescribed such a workshop in their requirements.

Multilingualism has also been linked to cognition, as implied by the reported improvement of language skills. Indeed, given that the first language has been reported to positively facilitate the acquisition of subsequent languages, it goes without saying that multiple languages should assist students to acquire multiple perspectives and thus enrich their educational experience. Nevertheless, multilingualism in the workshops seems to have excluded Sign Language. There is an urgent need to acknowledge and repair the past injustices towards the Deaf community. When everybody embraces Sign Language, it will go a long way into the inclusion of the Deaf community in every sphere of life, especially in mainstream education.

Furthermore, there is a need to increase the frequency of these kinds of workshops. Having them just once per semester gives the impression that it is a box that must be ticked. If multilingual students are to benefit from their multilingual realities, then frequent training to tap into their multilingual nature will be required such that it forms part and parcel of their academic life.

## **Limitations**

The small sample size, made smaller by participants who did not complete the questionnaire, led to a limited pool to draw upon for study findings. The general nature of the workshop questionnaire also meant that participant responses were sometimes vague or overly general. These limitations can be addressed in future iterations of this study by enlarging and refining the questions on the post-workshop survey, and conducting additional workshops to enlarge the data pool.

This study was crafted as a preliminary inquiry into multilingual graduate students' writing experiences at a South African university. Thus, researchers recognise the time limitations that impacted the ability to host multiple workshops and collect more data by way of attendee responses. Nevertheless, our preliminary findings provide valuable insight into students' desire to learn more about how to address multilingualism in the graduate student writing experience, and future scholarship can expand on our initial findings.

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