Preconditions for the Inclusion of Home Languages in an English First Additional Language Context

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Abstract:
Introduction: Today, classes made up of learners with different linguistic backgrounds are a reality in many countries, including South Africa. Thus, this study was driven by the need to explore the various preconditions that must be met for the inclusion of home languages in an English First Additional Language context in the Further Education and Training phase.
Methods: For this qualitative study, one-on-one interviews were used to collect data from the selected 6 English First Additional Language teachers.
Results: There is a need to provide support for English First Additional Language pre-service and in-service teachers through workshops for the co-option of home languages to teach English First Additional Language. Translated books in African languages, alongside the English version, should be used in schools.
Discussion: Exposure to English varies greatly across contexts, meaning different strategies are needed for successful English acquisition, especially as an additional language.
Limitations: Only 6 teachers were used as respondents thus the findings are not generalisable.
Conclusions: There is a need to investigate the different prerequisites that must be fulfilled for home languages to be included in English First Additional Language teaching.

Key words: English First Additional Language, mother tongue, multilingual, multilingualism, home languages, plurilingual.

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Introduction

Multilingualism is common in Africa, so it is important to finally utilise this asset together with the continent's cultural variety (UNESCO, 2010). It is not an issue that would keep the continent cut off from knowledge and the rise of knowledge-based economies, which are communicated through global languages of increased communication.

Due to the combination of their linguistic proficiency, educational background, past knowledge, and life experiences, multilingual learners have access to a wide variety of cognitive, linguistic, and semiotic resources (Rajendram, 2021). Therefore, rather than adopting an either-or strategy, language selection, recognition, and sequencing in the educational system, and accessibility to a broader audience should adopt a gradual, and inclusive approach (UNESCO, 2010).

As a result of globalisation, school populations are becoming more diverse worldwide, and educators and decision-makers are constantly looking for new methods to use the variety of linguistic and cultural resources available to their children. In many countries nowadays, courses consisting of learners from varied linguistic origins are the norm. It is still unclear, though, how to handle this language diversity in the classroom. According to Peyer, Barras, and Lüthi (2020), multilingual methods like "awakening to languages" are thought to be a potential way to raise awareness of linguistic diversity and find parallels and distinctions among different languages.

A study by Garcia and Lin (2016) found that educators are at a loss on how to use, or promote many community languages in the classroom due to the absence of a clear multilingual policy. The absence of clear criteria makes it difficult for teacher educators to prepare teachers with appropriate multilingual teaching methods. When there is a chance to use home languages in additional language teaching and learning contexts, the challenge is in putting the approach into practice because, among other things, there is a lack of guidance for additional language teachers regarding the use of home languages in these contexts.

1   Literature review

The theme of language in education has been a contentious issue ever since former colonies in Africa, Asia and South America gained their political independence. In a 1953 landmark publication, UNESCO underscored the importance of educating children in their mother tongue (UNESCO, 1953). Language and communication are without doubt two of the most important factors in the learning process. Even as per its 2003 Resolution: UNESCO supports bilingual and/or multilingual education in the slightest degree levels of education as a way of promoting both social and gender equality and as a key element of linguistically diverse societies (UNESCO, 2003; Parveen, Amin Dar,

Rasool, & Jan, 2022). Multilingual classrooms are a growing phenomenon around the world as a result of rapid increases in global mobility and migration. The planet has always been multilingual, and how we develop learning and teaching success must consider the multilingual realities of the planet.

The field of English first additional language teacher education seems to be slowly evolving from a perspective that was animated more by tradition and opinion than by theoretical definitions to a new perspective that seeks to reconceptualise the field and establish a research-based approach to language teacher education (Vélez-Rendón, 2002). Even the European Commission (2015) asserts that, in the field of education and particularly in the area of foreign language learning, teachers "should be trained to deal with the growing diversity of learners". In the South African context, the challenge resides in identifying appropriate training courses, finding opportunities, available time and available money, to mention a few, for teachers to attend these courses but also the willingness to adopt such diverse changes requested by a multilingual pedagogy. Until such time, South African teacher training programmes are constrained by policies that require the training of teachers to develop literacy in English beyond the first three years of so-called home language teaching (van der Walt, 2022). This means that learners and teachers are multilingual, and teachers could benefit from being trained to implement multilingual teaching strategies. A teacher has to demonstrate a genuine interest in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes that are conducive to multilingual and multicultural understanding. Still, one has to keep in mind the fact that "being an effective multilingual educator is a lifelong process" (Clauss-Ehlers, 2006).

The monolingual language ideology has long prevailed in English as a second/foreign language classroom with a traditional belief that native English should be regarded as the ultimate goal of English language teaching (ELT). Some studies have often presented a picture of a strong monolingual advantage, thus disputing the idea that has been consolidated and accepted as common wisdom that bilinguals have an advantage over monolinguals (e.g., Gathercole et al., 2014; Paap & Greenberg, 2013). Such monolingual ideology is embedded in many people's minds, including policymakers, language practitioners, and even teachers. Monolingualism has the assumptions of exclusive target language use without permission of translation in the teaching of language or literacy (Cummins, 2007). From a traditional perspective, learners' first language has been viewed as detrimental to language learning and sealed off from language learning classrooms (Lin, 2015).

Because language is a "cultural tool" (Johnson, 2009), learning a foreign language implies for learners close contact with the target language culture. Gardner (2012) emphasises the fact that "the study of language needs to be inclusive of the linguistic diversity in the social, local community and society at

large". Learning a foreign language entails more than just learning grammar and vocabulary. In fact, it constitutes an opportunity to question one's identity in relation to mother-tongue culture and the target culture.

According to some scholars, educational justice requires home languages to be included and valued in school. For instance, Krumm (2016) argues that disregarding children's home languages would deprive these children of social recognition. In turn, this is supposedly central to the development of self-esteem, which itself is an essential prerequisite for the development of identity (Krumm, 2016). Besides, Dausend and Lohe (2016) argue that the integration of home languages can support multilingualism of learners, especially on the affective level. Similar to Krumm (2016), they point out that the inclusion of home languages can lead to an appreciation of and a positive attitude towards one's own multilingual identity. Moreover, as Sánchez and Kasun (2012) point out, "teachers can enrich classroom lessons and promote cross-cultural understanding among students" by drawing on the knowledge of multilingual children.

Despite recent research on the importance of embodied learning and culturally sustaining instruction, high-stakes school reform and curriculum mandates too often promote teaching-to-the-test practices that effectively silence the cultural and multimodal repertoires of an increasingly multilingual student population (Flores & Schissel, 2014). Some challenges hinder full co-option of home languages in additional language settings, and they are unlimited to some of the following cited challenges. Often lacking are pedagogic practices that afford learners tangible resources "to appropriate and challenge dominant knowledge domains in our increasingly discursive society" (Harman & Simmons, 2014). Besides, Ibrahim and Gwandu (2016) assert that there is non-availability of teaching materials, particularly relevant textbooks in the indigenous languages. In addition, texts and images in school textbooks often fail to incorporate lived experiences and identifications of multilingual learners (Chun, 2015). As pointed out by Cummins and Early (2010), by bringing their identities into the creation of multimodal texts, students are encouraged to connect what is happening in the classroom with power relations circulating in school and society. Although Canagarajah (2016) advises that additional language teachers should be multilingual individuals in their own right, not all additional language teachers are multilingual.

2   Research methodology

This case study was designed as a qualitative research project, as it sought to explore the various preconditions that must be met for the inclusion of home languages in an English First Additional Language (EFAL) context in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase. For this qualitative study, only 6 high school EFAL teachers in the FET phase were selected as the respondents.

The respondents were referred to as either L1 or L6 to ascertain anonymity and confidentiality. The researchers used face-to-face interviews to collect data from the respondents. Before the respondents took part in the face-to-face interview sessions, they were informed of the general aim of the study. During the interviews, the researchers audio recorded the sessions and also wrote some notes.

This study employed the content analysis method to analyse the qualitative data gathered. The analysis was conducted through an interpretive approach, which involved the identification of significant patterns from the information obtained, resulting in the volume of data. The analysis of the respondents' responses involved finding links and similarities in their answers, which were subsequently coded appropriately. The researchers then proceeded to condense and organise the results into coherent themes. By employing this rigorous method of analysis, the researchers were able to derive meaningful insights from the qualitative data that provided valuable contributions to the study's overall objective.

3   Results

Various preconditions must be met for the inclusion of home languages in an English First Additional Language context in the Further Education and Training phase. These preconditions have been presented in the themes below.

3.1 Teacher training

In the field of education and particularly in the area of foreign language learning, teachers "should be trained to deal with the growing diversity of learners" (European Commission, 2015). We believe that even in South Africa, the arguments for using standardised languages are strong and arguably, they are rarely challenged. Until such time, South African teacher training programmes are constrained by policies that require the training of teachers to develop literacy in English beyond the first three years of so-called home language teaching (van der Walt, 2022). This indicates that both teachers and students speak many languages, and it would be advantageous for educators to have training in using multilingual teaching techniques. Of course, there are many examples of translanguaging procedures used by primary and secondary school teachers, but these tactics are not always included in teacher preparation programmes and - more significantly - are not encouraged (van der Walt, 2022). Similarly, the following respondents had this to say:

A few years ago, when I was a university student, there was no focus on managing a bilingual classroom. There were never any official tasks for managing bilingual classes. When I started teaching full-time in a classroom, I had to change the way I did things. L3

When I was teaching EFAL, I had to learn how to manage a multilingual classroom on my own. If I had experience managing multilingual classrooms in a university, I believe I would have handled the situation differently, if not better. But I suppose that's what the current curriculum for teacher education is handling these days. L5

The Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education Institutions1 of 2020 is an example of language status planning formulated to find a place for African languages in higher education. The policy calls upon universities 'to adopt a flexible approach in the implementation of English as the language of learning and teaching' (DHET, 2020). The policy links higher education to school education, with an explicit reference to the training of language teachers for African languages (DHET 2020). This resonates with what the following respondents had to say:

In my opinion, teacher preparation programs ought to take into account what happens in classrooms. The truth is that experiences in multilingual classrooms should shape the teacher education curriculum as well. As a result, when teaching EFAL, student teachers require numerous official tests regarding how to handle multilingual teaching content. L1

In my opinion, teacher preparation programmes ought to consider what happens in classrooms. The truth is that experiences in multilingual classrooms should shape the teacher education curriculum as well. As a result, when teaching EFAL, student teachers require numerous formal tests regarding how to handle multilingual teaching content. L6

3.2 Acknowledge that EFAL classrooms are multilingual

For multilingual pedagogy to succeed in an EFAL environment, EFAL teachers must accept that their students speak more than one language. We think educators should be aware that, although EFAL students are multilingual and multicultural in the formal classroom, every single one of them needs to feel safe, treated equally, and free from discrimination in the learning settings they are a part of. As a result, multilingual and multicultural methods of teaching EFAL encourage respect and tolerance for diversity among all those involved in the educational system, while also celebrating the diversity of languages and cultures (Pop, 2016). The learning and teaching that follows are shaped and fashioned by culture, which has a significant influence on the educational process and contents. As such, culture and cultural components cannot be ignored within the educational system (Erikson, 2010). Furthermore, the basis for teaching and learning in multicultural pedagogy is composed of the beliefs, experiences, and cultural values of the learners. In line with the above, the respondents had this to say:

For easier acceptance of home languages in EFAL contexts, teachers need to admit that their learners can speak many languages, thus, restricting them to only one language, English, will be unfair to them. L2

All EFAL educators must acknowledge that learning is a communal as well as an individual endeavour. Being social suggests that in an EFAL context, EFAL learners employ several languages to clarify ideas. In South Africa, you hardly ever see a monolingual student in an EFAL classroom. L4

3.3 Acknowledge the importance of multilingualism in language education

The respondents also recommended acknowledging the significance of multilingualism in language instruction as a prerequisite. We feel that recent studies on bilingual education should support this acknowledgment. Recent studies have clarified the functioning of multilingualism and emphasised its many benefits. According to Parveen, Amin Dar, Rasool, and Jan (2022), recognizing and incorporating multilingualism in teaching and learning effectively can promote a professional discussion and guarantee that pedagogical practices are successful and intentional. In the South African context, several studies showcase the advantages of multilingual education in language learning (Seretse, 2021; Zano & Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2023; Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2021; Zano, 2022b; Zano, 2020). All this is echoed in the following sentiments:

All educators who teach EFAL must recognize that learning is both a group and an individual process. Being social implies that EFAL learners use several languages to elucidate concepts in an EFAL environment. It is rare to find a monolingual student in an EFAL classroom in South Africa. L3

It is common knowledge that if I allow my EFAL learners to embrace their differences in their home languages, this can help them boost their confidence, thus improving academically. Besides, they will learn other learners' languages be it Xitsonga, Sepedi, isiZulu, to name a few. L1

According to Kroll, Bobb, Misra, and Guo (2008), bilinguals may incur additional costs when learning a new language since they must locate the appropriate words because their non-target language is suppressed. In any case, we firmly feel that to acknowledge and appreciate the multilingual component of our EFAL classrooms in the FET phase in South Africa, we need to be mindful of both our own and our students' perceptions of people who speak different languages. Correspondingly, the respondents had the following to say:

When teaching EFAL in the FET phase, we must dispel the criticisms made against multilingual classroom procedures. I don't think learners of multiple languages will become confused when learning a new language, such as English. Rather, individuals gain by applying what they already know to comprehend a new concept. L6

Home languages can be useful in EFAL classrooms if we encourage teacher-learner communication to further understand the effectiveness of using different languages, I mean learners' home languages in the classroom. L5

3.4 Language teachers should be bi/multilingual

Also, there has been a focus on investigating instructors as multilingual people (Canagarajah, 2017), particularly those who instruct several foreign languages. Compared to individuals who exclusively teach one foreign language, the teachers may rely on their multilingualism in quite different ways, which could have a big impact on the way their pupils learn. Likewise, the respondents had the following to say:

If the language instructor is multilingual - preferably speaking the African languages that most students speak in their classrooms - I believe home languages can be used when teaching EFAL. Our financial situation prevents us from hiring a multilingual assistant teacher to work alongside a monolingual language teacher in a co-teaching situation. L2

My preference is the recruitment of multilingual language teachers. I believe such a deployment will help in that these multilingual teachers will offer both spoken and written language support. L4

3.5 Parents must acknowledge multilingual practices

Parental involvement in a child's education is crucial in any learning environment. Numerous research has discovered a link between parental involvement and learner educational results, supporting the long-held belief that parental involvement promotes learner growth and academic accomplishment (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Ice & Hoover-Dempsey, 2011). However, getting parents to participate might be difficult. We think there is still a dearth of research, arguably, on parental involvement in multilingual EFAL classrooms in South Africa in the FET phase.

All this is echoed in the following sentiments:

In my opinion, EFAL classrooms must involve parents to foster reciprocal multicultural acceptance. Their collaboration with the school aids in removing EFAL students' sentiments of inadequacy and rejection from the classroom. It provides students with the much-needed self-assurance to learn a second language. Parents can collect the data required for teachers to comprehend the linguistic difficulties their kids are having. L4

Parental involvement is important because it acknowledges the cultural knowledge and practices of the students, which provides the stability and sense of belonging that students, particularly those who speak minority languages, sorely need. It helps them comprehend the linguistic demands of the students more successfully in order to meet the educational objectives. L1

3.6 No to English-only school language policy

The South African Language in Education Policy (LiEP) is meant to promote additive and functional multilingualism, sociolinguistic as well as cultural integration (DoE, 1997). The LiEP anchors on an educational system or model of structured bilingual education found in dual-medium (also known as two-way immersion) programmes (DoE, 1997). The result of this language policy is that two or more languages will be perceived and used as languages of learning (LoL) for all learners in the country (DoE, 1997). Similarly, the respondents asserted that:

Parental participation is crucial because it recognizes the cultural knowledge and customs of the pupils, which gives them the security and sense of community that they so desperately need - especially those who speak minority languages. To achieve the educational goals, it makes it easier for them to understand the language demands of the students. L5

Where I am working, it is difficult to prevent learners from using their home languages in an EFAL classroom. The school policy is that learners should use English to learn English but, certainly, they are using their home languages to learn English, and it's working well. L3

3.7 Multilingual textbooks

Another precondition cited by the respondents is the need for multilingual textbooks when embracing home languages to teach EFAL learners in the FET phase. Reports show that speakers of indigenous languages seem loath to read literature written in indigenous languages since the only book that sells well in African languages is the Bible. The fact that multilingual publishing is not a 'good' business in South Africa, there are not many multilingual textbooks in schools. In the same vein, the respondents had this to share:

My advice is that for us to use home languages in teaching an additional language like English, we need multilingual textbooks and other relevant teaching and learning materials in indigenous languages as well. L6

To be honest, there are no teaching materials, particularly relevant textbooks in our South African indigenous languages. The only notable multilingual text I see in our classrooms is either the Afrikaans or English dictionary. L2

3.8 Language of assessment

The respondents recommend the use of alternative assessments within EFAL classrooms as a universally sound teaching practice that is particularly appropriate for diverse learners in the FET phase. Furthermore, according to Otheguy, García, and Reid (2015), translanguaging in the classroom encourages speakers to freely use all of their language resources. They contend that educating and assessing bilingual or multilingual students only using

monolingual methods is unfair and erroneous. Rather, they propose that 'the potential to develop and free up all the learners' linguistic and semiotic resources' is provided by a translanguaging strategy. Translanguaging, therefore, levels the playing field in education and evaluation by providing bilingual or multilingual learners with the same opportunity as monolinguals have always had, i.e., the ability to utilise all their language resources.

I believe that we ought to think about how we evaluate the students in the EFAL classroom. I still believe that the greatest assessments consider students' numerous languages in the same classroom. For this reason, I no longer support written exams, as some students may be struggling only with English, the assessment language, which is not their native tongue. L6

My ideal assessment does not discriminate against learners on the grounds of language. I do not recommend any test as a form of assessment that acts as an instrument for the enforcement of an English-only practice, but presently, I have no option. L4

3.9 Encourage learner-centred approach

In the FET phase, the respondents suggested that when teaching EFAL, the students should be in the centre. Teachers should explicitly state that they are not the only people with knowledge by positioning themselves as co-learners alongside their students (Kartal & Balci, 2021). Hansen-Thomas, Stewart, Flint & Dollar, 2021). Learners should lead lessons, not the other way around, thus:

Teachers should be prepared to move away from the traditional methods of teaching and facilitate the active participation of learners in clarifying content for one another and furthering the class discussions in their home language to understand EFAL. L1

EFAL teachers should allow more proficient students with superior English language skills to interpret for their peers when elucidating the topic of discussion. Teachers who teach EFAL are urged to use cooperative learning activities that provide students the freedom to speak in their native tongues while the teacher's job is to keep an eye on them to make sure they stay on task. L5

4   Discussion

The study's conclusions showed that efforts to strengthen teachers' pedagogical strategies for controlling the use of home languages in EFAL settings during the FET phase have not been effectively made by universities, colleges, or the schools themselves. This is true even though the South African LiEP makes it clear that all learners in the nation will view and utilize two or more languages as languages of learning (LoL) (DoE, 1997). The situation in many South African EFAL classrooms during the FET phase is debatably dependent on how each EFAL teacher carries out multilingual activities in accordance with their level of

expertise and interpretation. It is well known that EFAL instructors will not have the necessary pedagogical skills to use home languages to teach EFAL in the FET phase if they do not have enough training and opportunities for professional development.

Additionally, the results demonstrate that EFAL in the FET learn EFAL with ease by using their native tongues, resulting in multilingual EFAL classrooms. It's merely an unconscious behaviour. This indicates that no learning environment that limits the language use of multilingual or bilingual EFAL learners to English alone reflects the real-world practices of these learners, whether they are at home or in the community at large. Because of this, research has shown that, on the other hand, students who study in (EFAL) contexts that support multilingual behaviours are more likely to do well academically and to have good opinions about who they are (Lee & Suarez, 2009). Furthermore, in addition to recognising the diversity of languages and cultures, multilingual and multicultural methods of teaching EFAL encourage respect and tolerance for diversity among all those participating in the educational system (Pop, 2016).

Furthermore, the results showed that while language difficulties shouldn't be a disadvantage, it is crucial to have EFAL learners ready for any content-related assessment tasks they may face throughout the FET phase. The default metric for evaluating topic knowledge in EFAL is frequently the command of a few key terms for the subject matter. In the FET phase, EFAL learners must, at minimum, be familiar with the compositional vocabulary that will be covered in the test. Naturally, the complexity of this knowledge transfer increases when the information being learned is in a language other than English, which is probably less familiar to both the learners and the teacher as the majority of EFAL teachers are not native English speakers (King & Chetty, 2013).

Even EFAL learners who are not more proficient in EFAL can complete the assigned activities with ease if EFAL teachers in the FET phase easily modify the language requirements in classroom-level assessments on the topic. However, standardised national assessments - like the South African EFAL National Curriculum Statement examinations - are administered in English, which is a specialized language. Thus, practice-to-mastery using the register utilised in the testing or assessment circumstance appears to be beneficial, regardless of the home languages involved in braiding learning of EFAL content. Although we think that evaluation is not democratic, much like classrooms, we should work to democratise the procedures by making sure that no EFAL is harmed by language barriers in EFAL scenarios. Currently, we also advise that recognising and navigating these disciplinary and linguistic challenges through a contact zone could be a useful first step.

As backed by Zapata and Laman (2016), the results demonstrate that teachers must value the languages and cultures of all EFAL learners, both vocally and via

their behaviours. EFAL teachers can accomplish this through reading literature that is varied, bilingual, or multilingual, organising discussions about many languages and cultures, and integrating families and communities into the classroom. Research has discovered a link between parental involvement and learner educational results, supporting the long-held belief that parental involvement promotes learner growth and academic accomplishment (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Ice & Hoover-Dempsey, 2011).

The results show that parental participation provides much-needed confidence in learning a second language to EFAL in the FET period. Parents can collect the data required for teachers to comprehend the linguistic difficulties their kids are having. Parental involvement is important because it acknowledges the cultural knowledge and practices of the students, which provides the stability and sense of belonging, that students, particularly those who speak minority languages, sorely need. To accomplish the teaching objectives, it helps them comprehend the language needs of the students more successfully.

The communicative approach to language instruction should be embraced by EFAL teachers, according to another conclusion. Learner-centred teaching is "born" out of the communicative approach; students are not only passive recipients of knowledge. In these kinds of settings, EFAL teachers - who frequently see themselves as facilitators and co-learners with their students - value the collaborative efforts of EFAL students in the classroom who help to construct knowledge from their linguistic experiences rather than claiming to be the only holders of knowledge. This result is consistent with the assertion made by Garcia and Wei (2014), who urge students to acknowledge and utilise linguistic diversity as a learning tool in general since it can help all students get ready for societies that are increasingly interconnected, as well as shifting workplace and academic environments. Additionally, when teachers provide space in the EFAL classroom throughout the FET phase for learners' languages, cultures, and customs, they enhance their professional relationships with their students.

In addition, it has been discovered that teaching EFAL in the FET phase requires a variety of multilingual textbooks and other teaching and learning resources before adopting home languages. The South African constitution and accompanying legislative instruments, which offer a supporting framework for multilingual education, are in line with this result; its implementation, however, necessitates the use of relevant instructional materials (Edwards & Ngwaru, 2011). The same authors made hints that South Africa's heavy reliance on the school market, where most people cannot or do not buy books, is a barrier to the country's attempts to implement the LiEP using multilingual textbooks.

Similarly, not much has changed in terms of multilingual publication during the country's democratic transition; statistics unambiguously demonstrate a robust

output of English and Afrikaans literature relative to a pitiful amount in the nine African languages (Morgan, 2006). We take into consideration Desai's (2016) suggestion that literature translated into African languages be used in the classroom in addition to their English translation to help students comprehend the subject matter. Additionally, to save money and space, we advise against having fully multilingual textbooks and in favour of simply summaries of the material. This means that only one textbook should contain the chosen summaries in African languages in addition to EFAL throughout the FET phase.

Conclusions

In many nations, including South Africa, courses consisting of students from diverse language origins are becoming commonplace. It is still unclear, though, how to effectively address this linguistic diversity in an EFAL setting during the FET period in South African schools. The necessity to investigate the different prerequisites that must be fulfilled for home languages to be included in an EFAL context during the FET phase is what motivated this study. It is impossible to ignore the need in South Africa for English access. However, because exposure to English varies greatly across contexts, different strategies will be needed for successful English acquisition, especially as an additional language. For this reason, the purpose of this study was to examine the various requirements that must be satisfied for home languages to be included in an EFAL context during the FET phase.

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